POEMS

ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON

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POEMS
OF
THE LONGER FLIGHT
CHIEFLY ODES AND APOSTROPHES

BY

ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON

WITH PREFATORY CONSIDERATION
OF
OBSTACLES TO POETRY IN AMERICA

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
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THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

TO MY COUSIN

ALICE WILLIAMS BROTHERTON,

POET AND SCHOLARLY STUDENT

OF SHAKESPEARE

FOREWORD

I think it was Robert Ingersoll who in response to the objection that a certain argument that he had made was an old one, said "An argument is new until it has been answered." Likewise it may be said that a poem, whenever written, is new to a reader who has never read it. I regard it as an intellectual weakness to exact of poetry that it shall be new or "modern." I make no apology, therefore, for the republication of these poems, and no explanation except to say that although they are not new, they are not archaic, but deal, both in method and substance, alike with the life of yesterday and to-day, as related to the perennial subjects of love, the arts, politics (in the large sense), and, in general, to the aspirations of mankind.

I think it a superficial pronouncement of Edgar Allan Poe that there is no such thing as a long poem. This dictum would rule out masterly odes such as "Lycidas" and the "Intimations of Immortality" and the "Adonaïs"; besides many another treasure of the type of "The Eve of Saint Agnes" that may not be

sacrificed to the whim or preference of even so illustrious a lyricist as Poe. It is a matter of temperament whether one may get the more enjoyment from the imaginative compactness of a sonnet or the alluring lilt of a song, or, on the other hand, from the wide sweep of the epic; and I confess to caring less for the latter. The main considerations are, first, of form: whether the accomplishment is adjusted to the canvas in conception, proportion, and the sense of movement; and, secondly, of material: whether the product has imagination and feeling of a sort that inspire and stimulate both the thoughts and the emotions as we have agreed to separate these co-efficients of the soul.

At the end of my seventy-fifth year, and as a personal souvenir of that event, I here reprint my more elaborate constructive poems, submitting these "sustained efforts" to the attention and criticism of those who really care for poetry, the judgment of no others being of the slightest value or interest.

I may perhaps make a similar collection of my sonnets and lyrics.

The chronological order of these poems as originally printed in various volumes is retained.

R. U. J.

PREFACE

OBSTACLES TO POETRY IN AMERICA [1]

A CHALLENGE TO CRITICS

LACK OF DISCRIMINATION BY PRESS AND PUBLIC

We hear a great deal nowadays about "the revival of poetry in America," and, judging from the space given to the publication and consideration of all grades of verse by the periodical press, there would seem to be some basis for thinking that the interest in this form of literary composition is on the increase. But it is easy to mistake the significance of a superficial and vague curiosity concerning verse, or concerning writers of verse, particularly of the eccentric type, that is now ravaging most of the magazines and some high-class newspapers, revealing the fact that, so far as poetry goes, these periodicals lack either intelligence, standards, or a sense of responsibility. For, so far as the market

[1] Reprinted from the Art World for December, 1916.

may effect the product, the importance of a discriminating public taste based on sound principles of criticism cannot be overrated.

Our people are perhaps farther behind in sound appreciation of good poetry than in appreciation of any other form of art except the drama, which here is rarely regarded otherwise than as a source of entertainment. A Frenchman goes to the first night of a new play not merely to be amused, but in the hope of finding it a work of art, both literary and dramatic. A French critic of the better sort, with pride in the great achievements of his country in art and letters, labors to elucidate, and to instill in his readers, standards based on principles, and this firm intellectual basis is what has given strength and distinction to French taste. A Frenchman scorns to have an opinion that he is not prepared to defend with reasons.

I should say that the chief obstacle to poetic taste in America is the lack of standard on the part of editors, for it is a sustained attitude that creates taste and not the occasional publication of good poetry in conjunction with meretricious or commonplace examples, thus confusing the judgment in its formative state. Naturally such an undiscriminating attitude toward verse is a source of discouragement to those who pursue poetry not as a recreation but as an art.

POETRY NOT CONSIDERED AS AN ART

And this brings us to the crux of the question. How few of those in this country who are called upon to write of poetry regard it as an art! The newspapers in their notices consider it chiefly as news, giving incomplete and disproportionate résumés of a volume, with, sometimes, a quotation—which, however disjointed and unrepresentative, at least allows the author to speak for himself. Most critics and readers are interested in poetry for subordinate reasons—for instance, as a manifestation of some novel tendency, or as a reflection of character, or as propaganda, or as a criticism of life, or as an extension of the frontier of verse. To how few is it of any moment whether the poet is an artist, having command of the technique—that is, the tools—of his profession! Fortunate is it to find a critic who does not confound art with artifice, or consider the principles of lyrical composition only so many hard-and-fast rules hampering the freedom of the writer. To how many, for instance, is the sonnet merely a prison-house of rules and regulations, instead of the freest of all traditional forms, and one which in the hands of Milton, Wordsworth, Keats and other English masters—to say nothing of Dante or our own countrymen—is like the flow of a brook, or the flight of a

bird, so that we conceive of it as the improvisation of a happy moment, not knowing the labor for the right word that has gone into its fashioning.

What we find lacking and desirable is a consideration of the architectonics, so to speak, of poetry—at least, of poetry that by its fine fibre is worthy of serious consideration at all. Who that reads a classic of English poetry stops to ponder it from the point of view of its construction, or proportion, or ease of movement, or progression of effect, or variety and perfection of rhythm? For the reader these technical excellencies may be negligible, because he is interested in what goes on at the footlights and not in the green room; but they cannot be ignored by the responsible critic, whose function it is to expound principles and draw that distinction between the temporary and the permanent which is the essence of taste.

THE TEST OF A POET

Besides his technique, which is to be inferred from his effects, the poet should be judged—and judged severely—by his range and weight of thought. Does he open any window of imagination upon the world? Has he anything new to offer concerning the main concepts of life—Love, Death, Nature, the Seasons, Beauty,

Happiness, Sorrow, Truth, Immortality? In his long poems, has he the sustained sweep of an eagle, or only the broken flight of a lamed pigeon? Does he see any deeper into the mysteries of life and bring us any accession of hope or truth? What has he to say of such timeworn topics as Friendship, Faith, Patriotism, Ambition, Youth, Poverty? Does he express his own time? Or, better, does he express the human nature that is independent of time? And, last of all, has he by the union of emotion, melody and imagination an accent of permanence? These are things which criticism, accepting its responsibility, should divine and enforce, so that a discriminating public taste may be formed and directed and become a stimulus and support of the best production.

POETRY BASED ON PRINCIPLES

The very familiarity of our people with verse of all kinds, as found in magazines and newspapers, has obscured the fact that the principles of poetry are as definite, as well-established and as immutable as those of painting, sculpture, architecture or music. It is all the more necessary, at this time, to insist upon these principles because they are constantly being challenged by a considerable number of writers—calling themselves vers-librists (I call them prose-librists)—who consider

that the limitations of the art are clogging and confining. This protest extends all the way from mild dissent to downright anarchy and is a part of the general egoistic lawlessness of the times, as reflected in painting by the cubists and in music by whimsical and eccentric composers of Germany and France. It would be idle to deny, even if one were disposed to do so, that in some instances the product of the dissenters is better than their theories, but when this is the case, it is usually because, like many other dogmatists, they do not make their practice conform to their preaching. In the main the protest originates either in inability or failure to produce poetry along established traditions of technique, or in a not unadmirable impatience with the barrel-organ type of composition, the only value of which is to give facility to a poet in the art of disregarding it. That is a sort of measles which most poets catch and, if they have good constitutions, happily survive.

RHYTHM ESSENTIAL

Now let us see what are the principles against which, chiefly, this protest is directed. One of them is rhythm, another is taste, and a third is form. (Rhyme, in the specific sense, is, of course, not essential.) Of these three rhythm is not only a principle of poetry; it is a

principle of life. It is transmitted to us by our parents; it pervades our waking, our walking and our sleeping. In poetry it is not accidental but essential. One might as well put under the ban the rhythm of the waves or of the sunlight as to consider it negligible in verse. If poetry is anything, it is something different from prose.

> And, sure, could life be told in prose
> There were no need at all for rhyme.

The employment of rhythm is not without its pitfalls. In the hands of one who is not an artist, it may take on so disproportionate an importance as to become fair game for the critics. I confess that the very exquisiteness and perfection of the rhythm of so fine an artist as Swinburne are sometimes as cloying as the brown honey of Hymettus, and pall upon me, to the obscuration of a great poet's elevated thought; but this is a personal impression, and, whether as melody or harmony, rhythm is the one thing that cannot be left out of the definition of poetry. In place of the polished smoothness of the boulevard the prose-librists offer us the fortuitous bumpings of a corduroy road. Most of their work reads like a bad libretto, or suggests a drunken man trying to walk a straight line. Mark Twain thought so ill of Jane Austen that he declared any library a good

one that did not contain one of her books, even, he added, if it did not contain any other volume. Much of the prose-librist work tempts one to say that by avoiding it one may acquire a liberal education in rhythm even if he read no poetry whatever.

THE ELEMENT OF TASTE

When we come to taste, we find something to excite the antagonism, even the animosity, of the self-sufficient, as though it were an assumption of superiority. To protest against taste is a mark of provinciality and intolerance. There are still communities in which to dress for dinner is taken as a sign of an aristocrat. Of course, taste may be over-cultivated and finicky and lacking in robustness. Against this the reaction is often extreme. In London a blasé and super-conventionalized circle of society welcomed the poet Joaquin Miller chiefly because he tucked his trousers in his boots and affected the cowboy. Here at last, they asserted, was the genuine American, all the others, whether in poetry or manners, being only imitators of the English. Miss Amy Lowell classifies among merely cultivated gentlemen who wrote verse her great kinsman, author of the noble Commemoration Ode, full of deathless lines. Lowell's sensitive and balanced taste

has been characteristic of the best work of all the great poets. The lack of a broad distribution of it in this country is not something to be proud of—is, indeed, one of the chief obstacles to the poetic art.

THE REVOLT AGAINST FORM

As for form, the so-called new school has an attitude toward it that reminds me of an incident of Theodore Parker. The great preacher was once conducting a party of young ladies through the Uffizi. When they came to the Venus of Medici, one of the girls began to giggle behind her fan, whereupon Parker said to her: "My dear, dost thou know how much immodesty there is in thy modesty?" So with the prose-librists—do they know how much regard for form there is in their formlessness? They conceive of the old-school poets as occupied with conventions of technique, when they themselves are wasting time over the scrupulous avoidance of form that might well be given to the task of producing something of real poetic substance. They wreak themselves in rebellion against tradition, as though the world, or any individual, were, at this moment, anything but the Past! Of what use is it to be the "heir of all the ages" if we are to throw away our inheritance?

WHAT THE POET SHOULD GIVE US

But, to repeat, given a decent regard for the principles of metrical composition—such as rhythm, taste, form, proportion, progression, and climax, the test of a poet is the *substance* of his work. What does he add, by stimulating the imagination or the emotions, to the enjoyment or the inspiration of the world? What new word or new view does he bring concerning the oldest topics of human interest? In so far as he gives to any one of these a fresher aspect, a broader comprehensiveness, a new co-efficient, he may fairly claim attention. If he has been able to do this, it will make no difference if he has sometimes written inferior verse. With a poet, as with a mountain, the altitude is reckoned by the highest point.

FALSE NOTIONS ABOUT POETRY

It will help us to appreciate poetry if we can clear our minds of some common misapprehensions regarding it that are an obstacle to its spread among us. In the first place its function is not to add to the knowledge of the physical world, and therefore experience of the so-called practical sort is not an essential equipment. To dispel mysteries and reduce the area of the un-

known is the business of Science. One of the chief services of poetry is not to solve the mysteries of life but to make us realize them, to awaken our wonder, and thus to keep us on a plane above the material, the self-satisfied, the commonplace and the matter-of-fact. This is far from saying that experience of a poetic sort is not of the greatest value. Something may even be conceded to the lady who once recommended to me in my editorial capacity the competence of her daughter to write love poetry because she had been "jilted twice." There is high authority for the statement that we learn in suffering what we teach in song. Experience of life is valuable—yes, but more valuable is the imaginative outlook *on* one's own experience and on that of others. One does not have to commit a murder in order to be able to describe one in a book or enact one on the stage: there is no evidence that Dickens or Salvini ever committed one. A pertinent instance of the superiority of the mind to experience is afforded by the fact that of twenty-five admirable poems on aviation that came under my notice within four years succeeding the first public exhibition by Wilbur Wright, not one was written with any background of experience in the art; and if anything further were necessary to prove my point, it is that sixteen of these twenty-five were written by women!

THE SO-CALLED "MODERN" SCHOOL

In the face of such a fact, and of the general participation of American poets in the life of their own time, it is irksome to hear the apologists of the so-called new school speaking of it as "modern." The only way to be thoroughly modern or to remain so is to be universal. Had Shakespeare expressed only the sixteenth and a bit of the seventeenth century, his "three-centuried wit," as Gilder called it, would not have survived to the present day. It is because he is human and essential and not parochial, either in time, or geography, or intellectual range, because he used his own period as the vaulting-board of his imagination, that he is to-day the recognized prince of all literature. He opened new windows upon many worlds, and taught us to look outside ourselves for light.

THE ILLUSION OF NOVELTY

Another obstacle to poetry is the demand for novelty, the restless inability to base one's content upon the great, simple and noble things common to human nature, as expressed in literature. This trait is a sign of crudeness and superficiality not to say superciliousness. It is the bane of the magazines and differentiates

literature from journalism. It pervades many phases of American life. A laughable instance recently came to my attention: An expert in embryology was demonstrating to a medical class the theory of the multiplication of life by cell-division—when one young woman student exclaimed to another: "Oh, but it is such an old method; I wish we could find a new one." A swarm of writers are trying to find some new path to Parnassus other than that which has been trodden plain by the feet of them that bring good tidings, the great poets of the world. To be bored by essentials is characteristic of small minds.

Another odd idea is the accent that is laid upon imagery, so that we have a little cult of writers called imagists. This reminds one of Holmes's lines about the katydid:

> Thou sayest an undisputed thing
> In such a solemn way.

The imagists are like the bachelor who, having insistently flouted the fair sex, at fifty married. "How does he take it?" said one. "Take it?" was the reply. "He takes it as if he had invented matrimony." That a poet can be anything else than an imagist is on a par with the claim that, through the new school, poetry has

only now become democratized. Spirits of Burns and Emerson! Have we forgotten

> A man's a man for a' that

and

> I care not how you are dressed,
> In the coarsest weeds or in the best,

or that other clarion note from Concord,

> God said, "I am tired of Kings,
> I suffer them no more."

One can fancy Whitman turning in his grave at the assertion of such a claim. Indeed, I can find no bravado of opinion, no awkward mingling of prose and verse, no variety of swagger or self-consciousness in the new school that is not to be found in Whitman. What he also has that I do not find there is vision, eloquence, moral force, and breadth of sympathy.

USES OF GREAT POETRY

It may be asked why it seems worth while to try to clear up these misapprehensions concerning the art of poetry. First, because every true workman has a pride in his own profession and in its power to help transform the world through the purity of its principles.

There is "a glory of words," as Browning put it, that transmits from generation to generation the essential values of life in the most cogent and stirring phrases. Secondly, because, even in this time of shifting standards, we realize that poetry has been and is to be the largest contributing factor in the creation of great men. This will be by the stimulus of the imagination to the imagination. And the one quality, it seems to me, that is rarest in our private and public life is imagination. The men of imagination have been the rulers and directors of mankind, and, so far as they have expressed themselves in literature, such they remain. Imagination also is the begetter of enthusiasm, and, as Emerson says, "Every great and commanding moment in the annals of the world is the triumph of some enthusiasm." Moreover, imagination is the begetter of thought, and, as Woodrow Wilson has said, "Nothing can give a nation dignity but its thought." These expressions indicate the important part that poetry may yet play in holding our best ideals up to us, and holding us up to our best ideals.

POETRY AND MANNERS

Poetry has another important function as the handmaid of manners. I am by no means a pessimist re-

garding America. As a people we have in high degree many fine qualities: good will, sensibility, sympathy, the sense of justice and of fair play, ambition, and much else that is admirable, though some of these often seem to be held in solution for lack of a pervading sense of responsibility; but in the grace of manners, the fine art of manners, it must be admitted that there is much to be desired. Emerson has a passage setting forth that the manners of a democracy ought to be the finest in the world, since it starts with the assumption of good breeding that all are entitled to equal consideration. But our practice is sadly behind our theory. We seem to be ashamed of the good manners we have and to have a similar shamefacedness about imposing them upon the young. The slouching type of college boy who stands and walks with his hands in his pockets and bows, if he bows at all, with his heels apart, has infected our society with a vulgar carelessness and lack of dignity which are not unknown even in the halls of Congress. The beautiful courtesy of the fine old American manners, North and South—than which there were none better—seems to have disappeared. Reverence, respect for elders and strangers, if they exist, find no correlative or gracious expression. In short, whether in Boston, New York, Washington, Chicago, or elsewhere, in cities, towns or hamlets, the one thing we lack socially

is form. I have not time here to speak of the bearings of this on our political life, nor of practical plans to improve public manners. I am convinced that in any community a committee of five women of tact and fine breeding could do wonders for the people in this neglected field. What I wish to suggest is that the finest poetry helps to make the finest ladies and gentlemen. Through it parents may choose the best company in the world for their children, teaching them the dignity and nobility of life, familiarizing them with chivalry and courtesy, transforming their egoism into altruism, till they catch that enthusiasm for the best which gives glow and vitality to human nature, and without which we are apt to become but men as trees walking. To attack form in poetry is to attack form in manners.

THE MUSE OF CONSOLATION

A final reason why we should cultivate intimacy with the masterpieces of poetry is the inspiration and consolation it will bring to us in daily life. Poetry speaks to us in the words of Emerson's "Wind Harp" and says:

> For I can mend the happiest days,
> And soothe the anguish of the worst.

It has been said that one who has learned an art in his youth can never be wholly unhappy. I will go further and say the same of one who has learned in his youth to love an art. The imperishable riches of poetry are within the reach of all. To live with them is not only to choose one's own company, but to master one's fate, and to live among the stars. In these days of transition, that for the moment seem like the going out of great beacons, one may find hope and solace in the words of the distinguished American astronomer whose devoted wife had shared his labors and who placed on the urn that holds her ashes and that now stands beside his telescope, these serene and inspiring words: "We who have loved the stars so well, how shall we fear the night!"

Robert Underwood Johnson.

CONTENTS

PAGE

FOREWORD vii

PREFACE: OBSTACLES TO POETRY IN AMERICA ix

THE WINTER HOUR: AN IDYL OF THE HOME, WITH LYRICAL INTERLUDES 3

APOSTROPHE TO GREECE: FROM THE PARTHENON . . . 29

THE VOICE OF WEBSTER 39

HANDS ACROSS SEA: AMERICA TO ENGLAND 49

ITALIAN RHAPSODY 59

SAINT-GAUDENS: AN ODE 67

THE VISION OF GETTYSBURG: A POEM OF RECONCILIATION 83

PANAMA ODE: GOETHALS OF PANAMA 89

THE CORRIDORS OF CONGRESS 105

EMBATTLED FRANCE 111

TOWERS OF REMEMBRANCE 117

POEMS OF THE LONGER FLIGHT

THE WINTER HOUR

I

Of all the hours of day or night
Be mine the winter candle-light,
When Day's usurpers of Love's throne —
Fame, Pride, and tyrant Care — are flown,
And hearts are letters of hid desire
Yielding their secrets at the fire.
Now beauty in a woman's face
Glows with a sympathetic grace,
And friend draws closer unto friend,
Like travelers near a journey's end;
In casual talk some common hope
Finds fresher wing and farther scope;
The eye has language fit to speak
Thoughts that by day 't were vain to seek
Out of their silence; and the hand
Grasps with a comrade's sure demand.
Pile high the winter's cheer and higher,—
The world is saved, not lost, by fire!

HEARTH-SONG

WHEN November's night comes down
With a dark and sudden frown,
Like belated traveler chill
Hurrying o'er the tawny hill,—
Higher, higher
Heap the pine-cones in a pyre!
Where's a better friend than fire?

Song's but solace for a day;
Wine's a traitor not to trust;
Love's a kiss and then away;
Time's a peddler deals in dust.
Higher, higher
Pile the driftwood in a pyre!
Where's a firmer friend than fire?

Knowledge was but born to-night;
Wisdom's to be born to-morrow;
One more log — and banish sorrow,
One more branch — the world is bright.
Higher, higher
Crown with balsam-boughs the pyre!
Where's an older friend than fire?

II

O SILENT hour that sacred is
To our sincerest reveries! —
When peering Fancy fondly frames
Swift visions in the oak-leaved flames;
When Whim has magic to command
Largess and lore from every land,
And Memory, miser-like, once more
Counts over all her hoarded store.
Now phantom moments come again
In a long and lingering train,
As not content to be forgot —
(O Death! when I remember not
Such moments, may my current run,
Alph-like, to thy oblivion!):
The summer bedtime, when the sky —
The boy's first wonder — gathers nigh,
And cows are lowing at the bars,
And fireflies mock the early stars
That seem to hang just out of reach —
Like a bright thought that lacks of speech;
The wistful twilight's tender fall,
When to the trundle comes the call

Of fluting robins, mingling sweet
With voices down the village street;
The drowsy silence, pierced with fear
If evil-omened owl draw near,
Quaking with presage of the night;
The soft surrender when, from sight
Hid like a goddess in a cloud,
Comes furtive Sleep, with charm endowed
To waft the willing child away
Far from the margin of the day,
Till chanticleer with roystering blare
Of reveille proclaims the glare.
Remember? — how can one forget
(Since Memory 's but Affection's debt)
Those faëry nights that hold the far,
Soft rhythm of the low guitar,
When not more sweetly zephyr blows
And not more gently Afton flows
Than the dear mother's voice, to ease
The hurts of day with brook and breeze,
To soothing chords that haunt the strings
Like shadows of the song she sings!
And as the music's lullaby
Locks down at last the sleepy eye,

Green visions of a distant hill
The fancy of the singer fill,
While spreads Potomac's pausing stream,
And moonlight sets her heart adream
Of that old time when love was made
With valentine and serenade.

Now, too, come bedtimes when the stair
Was never climbed alone.— Ah, where,
Beyond the midnight and the dawn,
Has now that other footstep gone?
Does sound or echo more reveal
When thirty winters may not steal
That still-returning tread,— that voice,
That made the timid child rejoice
Against the terrors of the wind,—
That tender tone that smoothed the mind?
Great heart of pity! it was then
God seemed a father, denizen
Of His own world, not chained to feet
Of some far, awful judgment-seat.
Then was revealed the reverent soul
Whom creed nor doubt could from the
goal

Of goodness swerve; who need not bend
To be of each just cause the friend.
Of whose small purse and simple prayer
The neediest had the largest share;
Beloved of child, and poor, and slave,
Nor yet more lovable than brave;
Whom place could not allure, nor pelf,—
To all men generous save himself;
Whose passion Freedom was — with no
Heat-lightning rage devoid of blow,
But as a bridegroom might defend
His chosen, to the furious end.

Still other moments come apace,
Each with fond, familiar face:
The pleasures of an inland boy
To whom great Nature was a toy
For which all others were forsook —
A spirit blithesome as a brook
Whose song in ripples crystalline
Doth flow soft silences between;
The dormant soul's slow wakenings
To dimly-apprehended things;

The sudden vision in the night
As by a conflagration's light;
The daily miracle of breath;
The awe of battle and of death;
The tears of grief at Sumter's gun,
The tears of joy when war was done,
And all the fainting doubt that masked
As hope when news of war was asked.
And oh! that best-remembered place,
That perfect moment's melting grace,—
The look, the smile, the touch, the kiss,
The halo of self-sacrifice,—
When Nature's passion, bounteous June,
To Love's surrender added boon,
As though the heir of every age
Had come into his heritage.

THE LOST ROSE

THERE was a garden sweet and gay,
Where rarest blossoms did delay
The look that Fanny bent to find
The flower fairest to her mind,
Till, at her word, I plucked for her
A rose of York-and-Lancaster.

The red did with the white agree,
Like passion blent in purity;
And as she blushed and blushed the more,
Till she was like the bloom she bore,
I said, "Dear heart, I too prefer
The rose of York-and-Lancaster."

'T is years ago and leagues away!
For oh! nor rose nor maid could stay
To freshen other Junes. And yet
How few who do not quite forget! —
Or know to which the words refer:
"Sweet rose of York-and-Lancaster."

In vain, when roses do appear
Upon the bosom of the year,
I search the tangle and the town
Among the roses of renown,
And still the answer is — "Oh, sir,
We know no York-and-Lancaster."

But ah, my heart, it knows the truth,
And where was sown that seed of youth;
And though the world have lost the rose,
There 's still one garden where it grows —
Where every June it breathes of her,
My rose of York-and-Lancaster.

III

Now call the Muses' aid to flout
The bleak storm's roaring rage without;
And bring it hail, or bring it snow,
It shall be Love's delight to show
What Fire and two defenders dare
Against the legions of the air,
Whose sharpest arrows shall not find
Cleft in the armor of the mind.
Why dread we Winter's deep distress,
His pale and frigid loneliness,
When here at hand are stored, in nooks
All climes, all company, in books!
A moving tale for every mood,
Shakspere for all,— the fount and food
Of gentle living,— Fancy's link
'Twixt what we are and what we think,—
Fellow to stars that nightly plod
Old Space, yet kindred to the clod.
Choose now from his world's wizard play
What is frolicsome and gay;
'T was for such evening he divined
Not Juliet but Rosalind.

Put the storied sorrow down,—
Not to-night, with Jove-like frown,
Shall the mighty Tuscan throw
Fateful lightnings at his foe,
Nor Hawthorne bend his graceful course
To follow motive to its source.
No, let gladness greet the ear:
Cervantes' wit, or Chaucer's cheer,
Or Lamb's rich cordial, pure and sweet,
Where aromatic tinctures meet;
Or princely Thackeray, whose pages
Yield humor wiser than the sages;
Or, set in cherished place apart,
Poets that keep the world in heart:
Milton's massive lines that pour
Like waves upon a windward shore;
Wordsworth's refuge from the crowd —
The peace of noon-day's poisèd cloud;
That flaming torch a jealous line
Passed on to Keats from Beauty's shrine;
Visions of Shelley's prophet-soul,
That, seeing part, could sing the whole,
Most like a lark that mounts so high
He sees not earth but from the sky.

And of the bards who in the grime
And turmoil of our changing time
Have kept the faith of men most pure
The three whose harps shall last endure:
Browning, Knight of Song,— so made
By Nature's royal accolade,—
Whose lines, as life-blood full and warm,
Search for the soul within the form,
And in the treasures of whose lore
Is Love, Love, ever at the core;
Tennyson, of the silver string,
Wisest of the true that sing,
And truest singer of the wise;
And he whose "stairway of surprise"
Soars to an outlook whence appear
All best things, fair, and sure, and near.

IV

Upon the wall some impress fine
Of Angelo's majestic line —
Seer or sibyl, dark with fate;
Near, and all irradiate,

Bellini's holy harmonies,
Bringing the gazer to his knees;
One group to hint from what a height
Titian with color dowers the sight;
A pageant of Carpaccio,
Flushed with an autumn sunset-glow;
Then, of Luini's pensive race,
The Columbine's alluring grace;
And, echo of an age remote,
Beato's pure and cloistered note.
And be not absent from the rest
Some later flame of beauty (blest
As a new star), lest it be said
That Art, that had its day, is dead.
Let Millet speak in melting tone —
Voicing the life that once was stone,
Ere Toil had found another dawn
Of Bethlehem at Barbizon.
Nor is it winter while Dupré
With daring sunlight leads the way
Into the woodland rich and dim;
Who love the forest, follow him;
And they who lean the ear to reach
The whispering breath of Nature's speech,

May with Daubigny wait the night
Beside a lake of lambent light
And margèd darkness — at the hour
(Soul of the evening!) when the power
Of man, that morn with empire shod,
Is shattered by a thought of God!
And ah, one more: we will not wait
For Death to let us call him great,
But, taking counsel of the heart
Stirred by his pure and perfect art,
Among the masters make a place
For Dagnan's fair Madonna's face.

A MADONNA OF DAGNAN-BOUVERET

Oh, brooding thought of dread!
Oh, calm of coming grief!
Oh, mist of tears unshed
Above that shining head
That for an hour too brief
Lies on thy nurturing knee!
How shall we pity thee,
Mother of sorrows — sorrows yet to be!

That babyhood unknown
With all of bright or fair
That lingers in our own
By every hearth has shone.
Each year that light we share
As Bethlehem saw it shine.
Be ours the comfort thine,
Mother of consolations all divine!

V

Nor be the lesser arts forgot
On which Life feeds and knows it not,
That everywhere from roof to portal
Beauty may speak of the immortal:
Forms that the fancy over-fill;
Colors that give the sense a thrill;
Soft lights that fall through opal glass
On mellow stuffs and sturdy brass;
Corners of secrecy that invite
Comfort, the handmaid of Delight;
The very breath of sculptures old
Held poised within a perfect mold;

A dainty vase of Venice make,
Fashioned for its one rose's sake —
Ay, winter's miracle of flowers
To cheat the mood and mask the hours:
Love's velvet-petaled pledge of June,
That, on the wings of Passion strewn,
Made courtly Persia conqueror
Of thrice the world she lost in war; —
Jonquils, that Tuscan sunshine hold
Within their happy hearts of gold; —
Narcissus, such as still are found
By Marathon's mountain-envied mound —
Food of the soul, well bought with bread,
As sage Hippocrates hath said.
All these perchance shall faintly yield
Odors from some Sicilian field
Where young Theocritus deep-strayed
In blooms celestial — where his shade,
Haunting his storied Syracuse,
Finds balm for his neglected Muse.
Add wanton smilax to entwine
Your Dancing Faun or God of Wine,
And you shall summon in a band
The joys of every summer land.

VI

But there 's a vision stirs the heart
Deeper than books or flowers or art,—
When Music, mistress of the mind,
Lender not borrower from the Wind,
Rival of Water and of Light,
Adds her enchantment to the Night.
What thoughts! what dreams! what ecstasies
When heart and fingers touch the keys!
Across what gulf of fate Love springs
To Love, if Love caress the strings!
By this mysterious amulet
One shall remember or forget;
When words and smiles and tears shall fail,
The might of Music shall prevail;
Shall move alike the wise and weak;
All dialects alike shall speak;
Outglow the rainbow to the doomed,—
Consuming all, be unconsumed;
Shall save a nation in its throes,
Luring with concord grappling foes;
Shall madden thus, yet shall be glad
(Oh, paradox!) to soothe the mad.

This rhythmic language made to reach
Beyond the reticence of speech —
Bland as the breeze of May it sighs,
Or rolls reverberant till the skies
Tremble with majesty! Not the mote
Most hid of all creation's rote
But holds some message that shall be
Transmuted into harmony.
Already, since the lisping-time
When music was but chant or chime,
What spirits have to man been lent
From God's discordless firmament! —
Beethoven, brother of the Nine,
But with a birthright more divine,—
Whose harmonies that heavenward wend
Wings to the laden spirit lend
Until, serenely mounting higher,
It melts into the starry choir;
Wagner, in whom the Passions meet
To throw themselves at Music's feet,—
Whose murmurings have charm to wring
From Love the secret of the Spring,—
And in whose clamor sounds the siege
Of heaven when Lucifer was liege.

Händel, whose aspirations seem
Like steps of gold in Jacob's dream;
Mozart, simplest of the great,
Heir of Melody's estate,
Who did blithe pipes of Pan prolong
And heighten to a seraph song.
Schumann, rare poet, with a lyre
Stringed in Imagination's fire;
And oh, that one of human strain! —
Chopin, beloved child of pain,
To whom the whole of Love was known —
Marvel, and mystery, and moan,
The joy secure, the jealous dart
Deep-ambushed in the doubting heart,
And all the perilous delight
That waits on doubt, as dawn on night.

Ah, who shall wake the charm that lies
Past what is written for the eyes
In such a scroll? The poet's need
Is that a poet's heart should read.
Happy the winter hour and fleet
When flame and waiting passion meet

In her pure fire whose chords betray
The St. Cecilia of our day!
Oh, velvet of that Saxon hand
So lately iron to command! —
Like, at the shower's sudden stop,
The softness of the clinging drop.
What tender notes the trance prolong
Of that famed rhythmic cradle-song!
How faëry is her woven spell
Of minuet or tarantelle!
Who would return to earth when she
Transports us with a rhapsody!
And when in some symphonic burst
Of joy her spirit is immersed,
That path celestial fain to share,
We vow to breathe but noble air!

VII

Warmed with melody like wine,
Lighted by the friendly shine
Of the rich-replenished hearth,
Let us drink of wine and mirth

While waning evening's aftermath
Grows pleasant as a winding path
With wit's surprises and the tale
Adventurous, spreading sudden sail
For Arcady and hallowed haunts
Along the shores of old Romance:
Now shall fare the fancy forth
To pillared grottoes of the north,
Where circling waters come again
Like thoughts within a sleepless brain;
Or, coursing down a softer coast
Whose beauty is the Old World's boast,
Shall pause for words while memory's flame
Kindles at Taormina's name.

And now in shifting talk appears
Pomp of cities clad with years:
Gay or gloomy with her skies,
Gray Paris like an opal lies
Sparkling on the front of France.
Avignon doth hold a lance
In a tourney-list with Nîmes.
Fair Seville basks in helpless dream

Of conquest, as in cagèd air
Dreams the tamed lion of his lair.
Regal Genoa still adorns
Her ancient throne; and Pisa mourns.
Now we traverse holy ground
Where three miracles are found:
One of beauty — when with dyes
Of her own sunset Venice vies.
One of beauty and of power —
Rome, the crumbled Babel-tower
Of centuries piled on centuries —
Scant refuge from Oblivion's seas
That swept about her. And the third? —
O heart, fly homeward like a bird,
And look, from Bellosguardo's goal,
Upon a city with a soul!
Who that has climbed that heavenly
height
When all the west was gold with light,
And nightingales adown the slope
To listening Love were lending hope,
Till they by vesper bells were drowned,
As though by censers filled with sound —

Who — who would wish a worthier end
To every journey? or not blend
With those who reverently count
This their Transfiguration Mount?

LOVE IN ITALY

They halted at the terrace wall;
Below, the towered city lay;
The valley in the moonlight's thrall
Was silent in a swoon of May.
As hand to hand spoke one soft word
Beneath the friendly ilex-tree,
They knew not, of the flame that stirred,
What part was Love, what Italy.

They knew what makes the moon more bright
Where Beatrice and Juliet are,—
The sweeter perfume in the night,
The lovelier starlight in the star;
And more that glowing hour did prove,
Beneath the sheltering ilex-tree,—
That Italy transfigures Love,
As Love transfigures Italy.

VIII

And thou, who art my winter hour —
Book, picture, music, friend, and flower —
If on such evening, dear, I trace
Paths far from Love's divine embrace,
Wandering till long absence grows
Into brief death — less death's repose —
Let me be missed with love and cheer,
As miss we those of yesteryear
With whom we thought (beguiling hope!)
To stray together down Life's slope,
While Age came on like gentle rain.
They who but ceased their joyous strain —
Where may the limit to the sea
Of their bereaving silence be?
Yet sorrow not: we may prolong,
If not the singer's voice, the song.
And if beyond the glorious strife
Of this good world, I tread new life,
Reluctant, but, by Heaven's aid,
With infant instinct unafraid,

May Memory plead with thee to save
Out of my song its happier stave.
From the Dark Isthmus let not gloom
Deepen the shadows of thy room.
For me no ban of smile or jest:
Life at its full is holiest.
Let all thy days have pure employ
In the high sanity of joy;
Be then, as now, the friend of all,
Thy heart a thronged confessional,
A fount of sympathy, a store
Of jewels at an open door.

Here do I falter, love, for fear
Of sacrilege to what is dear.
Not now — not here; some luminous time,
Some perfect place, some fortunate rhyme
May yield that sacrificial part
That poets fitly give to Art.
Ever the moment most elate
Must for a speech sufficient wait;
Only the happiest know, alas!
How soundless is the brimming glass.

But, though Love need nor praise nor oath,
And silence oft is firmer troth,
Yet know that if I come no more,
'Tis fault of sail, or sea, or shore,
Not of the pilot,— for the heart
Sees its way homeward from the start.
If Death have bond that Love can break,
It shall be broken for thy sake.
If spirits unto mortals teach
Some rudiment of subtler speech,
My presence shall about thee stay
To prompt the word it cannot say.

So when, with late farewell and slow,
The guests into the night shall go,
Each pulse by sympathy more warm,
Forgetting the forgotten storm,
And thou alone into the blaze,
Thrilled with the best of life, shalt gaze
With hunger for the life divine,
Oh, be that blessed moment mine! —
With thee, who art my winter hour,
Book, picture, music, friend, and flower.

APOSTROPHE TO GREECE*

From the Parthenon

(inscribed to the greek people on the seventy-fifth anniversary of their independence)

I

O land of sage and stoic —
Of human deeds heroic,
Of heroes' deeds divine!
What braggart of the nations
Shall scorn thy proud narrations —
Thou who hast named the stars from thy Olympian line!

* This ode, begun on the steps of the Parthenon in 1886, was published in the New York "Independent" of April, 1896, and, in part, in modern Greek in the "Hellas," a record of the Olympic Games of that year.

In spite of Moslem crime
Thou livest! Hungry Time
Can but the dead devour.
Though asphodel hath strewed
This marble solitude,
The silence thrills with life, the ruins rise in power.

Yon sea's imperial vastness
Was once thy friend and fastness;
By many a curving strand,
'Twixt purple capes, on edges
Of seaward-looking ledges,
Rose the white cities sown by thy adventurous hand.

Nor couldst thou think of these
As lonely colonies
Wherewith rich Corinth lined
The West, while Dorian sails
Outrode Ægean gales;
Nay, suburbs were they all, molds of Athenian mind.

Then could thy galleys pass
From Tyre to Acragas,
By Grecian islands gray
That dreamed of Athens' brow,
And gaily to the prow
Harnessed the pawing winds to seek some Attic bay.

Here to Athene's feast,
From West, from North, from East —
  Through Jason's fabled strait
Or round Malea's rock —
The homesick sails would flock,
Oft with an Odyssey of peril to relate.

And what exultant stir
When the swart islander,
  Bound for the festal week,
First saw Colonna's crest
Give back the glowing West
Far past Ægina's shore and her prophetic peak!

I hear his cheery cries
Though Time between us lies
  More wide than sea and land.
The gladness that he brings
Thrills in the song he sings,
Beaching his welcome craft on Phaleron's level strand.

O harbor of delight!
Strike the torn sail — to-night
  On Attic soil again!
When joy is free to slaves
What though the swarming waves
Follow each other down like the generations of men!

Now, for a time, to war
And private hate a bar
Of sacred armistice;
Even in the under-world
Shall the rough winds be furled
That tell of wrangling shades that crowd the courts of Dis.

'T is Peace shall bring the green
For Merit's brow. What scene,
O Athens, shall be thine!
Till from Parnassus' height
Phœbus' reluctant light
Lingers along Hymettus' fair and lofty line.

With dance and song and game
And oratory's flame
Shall Hellas beat and swell,
Till, olive-crowned, in pride
The envied victors ride,
Fellows to those whose fame the prancing marbles tell.

O antique time and style,
Return to us awhile
Bright as thy happy skies!
Silent the sounds that mar:
Like music heard afar
The harmony endures while all the discord dies.

Not yet the cloister-shade
Fell on a world afraid,
  Morbid, morose — the alloy
Found greater than the gold
Of life. Like Nature old
Thou still didst sing and show the sanity of joy.

Thine is that wisdom yet
That Age from Youth must get,
  Age pay to Youth in kind.
Oh, teach our anxious days
Through thy serener ways
How by the happy heart to keep the unclouded mind.

II

But thou wert Freedom's too
As well as Joy's. She drew
  From every mountain breast
An air that could endure
No foreign foe — so pure
That Lycabettus neighbors the Corinthian crest.

Nor was thy love of life
For thee alone. Thy strife
  Was for the race, no less.
Thee, to whom wrong is done
While wrong confronts the sun,
The oppressor cannot crush, nor teach thee to oppress.

By thee for lands benighted
Was Freedom's beacon lighted
That now enstars the earth.
Welcome the people's hour!
Passed is the monarch's power,
Dread waits not on his death that trembled at his birth.

As down a craggy steep
Albanian torrents leap
Impetuous to the sea —
Such was thy ancient spirit,
Still thine. Who that inherit
Hatred of tyranny inherit not from thee?

Look to the West and see
Thy daughter, Italy —
Fathered by Neptune bold
On Cumæ's sheltered strand
(Forgot but for the hand
That saved to Art her sibyl many-named and old);

That temple-sated soil,
Whose altar-smoke would coil
To hide the Avernian steep,
Grows the same harvest now —
Best increase of the plow,
Fair Freedom, of thy seed, sown for the world to reap.

Though regal Rome display
The triumphs of her day;
  Though Florence, laurel-hung,
Tell how she held the van
In the slow march of man —
Greek was the path they trod, Greek was the song they sung.

Look farther west and there
Behold thy later heir,
  Child of thy Jove-like mind —
Fair France. How hath she kept
The watch while others slept?
Hath Wisdom hastened on while Justice lagged behind?

Like thee, full well she knows
Through what maternal throes
  New forms from olden come;
Her arts, her temples, speak
A glory that is Greek,
And filially her heart turns to the ancestral home.

For her no backward look
Into the bloody book
  Of kings. Thrice-rescued land!
Her furrowed graves bespeak
A nobler fate: to seek
In service of the world again the world's command.

She in whose skies of peace
Arise new auguries
To strengthen, cheer, and guide —
When nations in a horde
Draw the unhallowed sword,
O Memory, walk, a warning specter, at her side!

Among thy debtor lands,
See, grateful England stands;
Who at thy ranging feet
Learned how to carry Law
Into the jungle's maw,
And tempers unto Man or cold or desert heat.

All that thou daredst she dares
Till now thy name she bears —
Mother of Colonies.
What if thy glorious Past
She should restore at last,
And clothe in new renown the dream of Pericles!

If she but lean to thee
Once more thy North shall be
Uplifted from the dust.
Mother of noble men,
Thy friends of sword and pen,
England, though slow to justice, shall again be just.

And now from our new land
Beyond two seas, a hand!
  Our world, for ages dumb,
Part of thy fable-lore,
Gathers upon her shore
Each dying race as soil for one chief race to come.

But of our beating heart
Thy pulse how large a part!
  Our wider sky but bounds
Another Grecian dawn.
Lament not what is gone;
Pentelicus grieves not, for Fame hath healed his wounds.

III

Then, Hellas! scorn the sneer
Of kings who will not hear
  Their people's moaning voice,
More deaf than shore to sea!
The world hath need of thee —
The world thou still canst teach to reason and rejoice.

Yes, need of thee while Art
Of life is but a part —
  Plaything or luxury.
Greek soil perchance may show
Where Art's hid stream doth flow —
To rise, a new Alpheus, near another sea.

Yes, need of thee while Gold
Makes timid traitors bold
To lay republics low;
Not ignorant nor poor
Spread for their feet the lure —
The kind, the loved, the honored, aim the brutal blow.

Then, though by faction's blunder,
And boasts, of mimic thunder,
Again thou art betrayed,
Vain this, vain every treason;
With thee are Hope and Reason,
Nor Past can be forgot, nor Future long delayed.

Troy was, but Athens is —
The World's and Liberty's,
Nor ever less shall be!
Though fallen are old fanes
The vestal fire remains
Bright with the light serene of immortality.

THE VOICE OF WEBSTER

Silence was envious of the only voice
That mightier seemed than she. So, cloaked as Death,
With potion borrowed from Oblivion,
Yet with slow step and tear-averted look,
She sealed his lips, closed his extinguished eyes,
And veiling him with darkness, deemed him dead.
But no! — There 's something vital in the great
That blunts the edge of Death, and sages say
You should stab deep if you would kill a king.
In vain! The conqueror's conqueror he remains,
Surviving his survivors. And as when,
The prophet gone, his least disciple stands
Newly invested with a twilight awe,
So linger men beside his listeners
While they recount that miracle of speech
And the hushed wonder over which it fell.

What do they tell us of that fabled voice?
Breathing an upper air, wherein he dwelt
Mid shifting clouds a mountain of resolve,
And falling like Sierra's April flood

That pours in ponderous cadence from the cliff,
Waking Yosemite from her sleep of snow,
And less by warmth than by its massive power
Thawing a thousand torrents into one.
Such was his speech, and were his fame to die
Such for its requiem alone were fit:
Some kindred voice of Nature, as the Sea
When autumn tides redouble their lament
On Marshfield shore; some elemental force
Kindred to Nature in the mind of man —
A far-felt, rhythmic, and resounding wave
Of Homer, or a freedom-breathing wind
Sweeping the height of Milton's loftiest mood.
Most fit of all, could his own words pronounce
His eulogy, eclipsing old with new,
As though a dying star should burst in light.

And yet he spoke not only with his voice.
His full brow, buttressing a dome of thought,
Moved the imagination like the rise
Of some vast temple covering nothing mean.
His eyes were sibyls' caves, wherein the wise
Read sibyls' secrets; and the iron clasp
Of those broad lips, serene or saturnine,
Made proclamation of majestic will.
His glance could silence like a frowning Fate.

His mighty frame was refuge, while his mien
Did make dispute of stature with the gods.

See, in the Senate, how his presence towers
Above the tallest, who but seem as marks
To guide the unwonted gaze to where he stands,
First of his peers — a lordly company.
Each State still gave the others of its best —
Our second race of giants, now, alas!
Buried beneath the lava-beds of war.
Not yet had weaklings trod the purchased path
To a feigned honor in the curule chair,
Holding a world's contempt of them for fame —
As one should take the leaves stripped from his scourge
To wreathe himself a counterfeit of bay.
An age is merely Man, and, thus compact,
Must grimly expiate paternal sins;
That age's shame stands naked to the world,
And no man dares to hide it; yet one boast
Palsies the pointing finger of to-day:
'T was slave, not master, that we bought and sold.

Oh, for fit word of scorn to execrate
Our brood new-born of Greed and Liberty!
Not the blind mass of stumbling ignorance
(For the dread portent of a blackening cloud

May by bold shafts of sunlight be dispersed),
But those who lead them to the nation's hurt —
These our kind neighbors, semblances of men,
The Church's bulwark, the beloved of homes,
Locked fast in friendship's ever-loyal pledge,
Yet to whom treason is their daily breath.
Not Lucifer, on each conspiring wind
Rallying his abject crew to new assaults;
Not all the recreant names that spawning War
Has cursed with immortality, can match
The craft of their betrayals. All is sold:
Law, justice, mercy, and the future's hope —
This land that buoys the fainting fears of Man.
Yet to praise Webster one of these has dared! —
Webster, undaunted by the hour's reproof,
Webster, untempted by the hour's applause,
Who scorned to win by any art but truth!
Who, had he heard the impious flattery,
Across the Senate would have launched his wrath,
Like Cicero on cowering Catiline,
In one white passion that forevermore
Had saved to Infamy an empty name
That now he spurns in silence from his grave.

Yet had he frailties, which let those recount
Who have not seen the nigh-o'erwhelmèd state

Rescued from peril by some roisterer's skill
While all the petted virtues of the home
Stood pale and helpless. Time 's a mountain-wall
That gives a fainter echo to one's best,
But unto weak or wanting, mere disdain.
He had his passions — all but one are dead:
That was his country. Never lover loved,
Soldier defended, poet praised, as he,
Who marveled all should worship not his queen,
And unto whoso loved her much forgave.
And when, one desperate day, the threatening hand
His hand so long arrested, he being gone,
Felt 'neath its pillow for the unsheath'd sword,
Who spoke for Union but with Webster's voice?
Who struck for Union but with Webster's arm?
Forgetful of the father in the son,
Men praised in Lincoln what they blamed in him.
And though, his natural tenderness grown grave,
He lives not in Love's immortality
Like Lincoln, shrined within his foeman's heart;
Though he trod not the path of him whose soul
Triumphed in song that beckoned armies on
More than persuading drum, dare-devil fife,
Or clarion bugle; though no battle-flame
Rose to a peak in him: yet was his blood
In heroes and his wrath in righteous war.

Then did the vision of his patriot hope,
Pictured in pleading but in warning words,
Inspire the inspirers, nerve the halting brave,
Make triflers solemn with the choice of death.
And when at last came Peace, the friend of all,
Grateful and wondrous as first drops of rain
After the long starvation of the drought,
Men harkened back to that prophetic hour
When two protagonists, like chosen knights,
Made long and suave epitome of war:
When Hayne arose 't was Sumter's gun was heard,
When Webster closed 't was Appomattox field.

But oh, his larger triumph was to come!
His voice, in victory potent, was in peace
Predominant. His all-benignant thought
That, never wavering through the strife of words,
No Alleghanies, no Potomac knew,
Searching the future to bring olive back,
Lived like a fragrance in the heart of Grant,
And at the perilous moment of success
Pointed the path to concord from the grave.
And what famed concord! — not a grudging truce,
Nor interlude of hate, but peace divine:
When hands with blood still wet again were clasped,
Each foe forgiving what is ne'er forgot;

The hacked sword eager for the scabbard's rest,
Not from the fear, but for the love of man.
Oh, loftier conquest of the Blue, that warred
For freedom, not for conquest! Victory,
Unsought, of all the hardly vanquished Gray!
Marvel of Europe staggering in arms;
Message of Hope unto the souls that herd
Dumb at the slaughter for the whim of kings;
Lusus of History until wars shall cease.
My country! since nor memory of strife,
Nor natural vengeance, nor the orphan's tears
Can from Love's nobler triumph hale thee back:
Who worthier than thou to lead the way
Unto the everlasting Truce of God,
When brothers shall toward brothers over sea
Stretch not the sword-blade, but the open palm,
Till on Time's long but ever-upward slope
They mount together to unreckoned heights,
And grateful nations gladly follow them!

. . . . . .

So sang I, proud to be but one of all
The sands upon a shore whereon there breaks,
Freighted with purpose vast, the will of Heaven —
When a rude clash I heard, that yet I hear,
As Discord grasped again her rusted harp
And struck new terror from the raveled strings,

Calling Ambition blindfold to the lead
Of Want, Dishonor, Perfidy, and Crime,
Who in their turn misguide the innocent,
Groping their way by the last firebrands
Plucked from their holocaust of hoarded truth.
The air we fancied peaceful as the noon
Was dark with sudden hatred, as with cloud
Blown, in long-gathered tempest, from the West,
Like a wild storm of summer heat and wind
Circling in passion, bruited by dismay,
And dragging death and chaos in its train,
As some old myth of savagery come true,
And Nature had turned demon, rending Man.

This madness Webster still can medicine,
Who was physician to its earlier taint.
He did not fury then with fury meet,
But to the sanity of eternal law
Wooed back the wandering mind. Who could forget
His calming presence when, ere he began,
Confusion fled before his morning look
Of power miraculously new and mild;
The speech as temperate as a wind of May;
The mind as candid as the noonday light;
The tones deliberate, confident, sedate,
Waking no passion, and yet moving all

With such a high compulsion that at length
Reason, the king that well-nigh had been lost
Upon the confines of his sovereign realm,
Remounted to the throne with steady step,
And men again were proud of his control.

So, in these days of hopeful hearts' despair,
When perils threat, ay, throng the ship of state,
And less from gale without than torch within,
Who — who but Webster with his faith serene
Shall rouse the sleeping to command their fate,
Shall bid them steer by the unswerving stars,
And in them troth with Liberty renew?
Imagination gave his spirit wings,
That, seeing past the tempest and the flame,
He might remind us of our destiny:
To save from faction what was meant for Man;
To cherish brotherhood, simplicity,
The chance for each that is the hope for all;
To guard the realm from Sloth, and Greed, and Waste —
The sateless Gorgons of democracy;
And above all, whatever storm may rage,
To cling to Law, the path of Liberty,
The prop of heaven, the very pulse of God.
Thus our new soil, the home of every seed,
Where first the whole world meets on equal terms,

Shall such new marvels show of man's estate
In knowledge, wisdom, beauty, virtue, power,
The Past shall fade in pity or in scorn,
While fresher joys shall thrill the pulse of earth.

No, Webster's fame not Webster's self can blot.
Fair is perfection's image in the soul,
And yearning for it holds the world to good.
Yet is it such a jewel as may not
Unto a single guardian be entrust,
But to the courage of a multitude
Who all together have what each may lack.
Though men may falter, it is Virtue's strength
To be indelible: our smallest good
By our worst evil cannot be undone.
The discords of that life — how short they fall,
Like ill-strung arrows! But its harmonies —
Harmonious speech large with harmonious thought —
Dwell in a nation's peace, a nation's hope,
Imperishable music; not the rhythm
Of some remembering moment, but the peal
And crash of conflict unforgettable
Piercing the mid and thick of night. No, no,
That voice of thunder died not with the storm,
But in the dull and coward times of peace
Long shall its echoes rouse the patriot's heart.

HANDS ACROSS SEA

I

England, thou breeder of heroes and of bards,
Had ever nation manlier shield or song!
For thee such rivalry have sword and pen,
Fame, from her heaped green, crowns with equal hand
The deathless deed and the immortal word,
For which dost thou thy Sidney hold more dear,
Defense of England or of Poesie?
Cromwell or Milton — if man's guiding stars
Could vanish as they came — which wouldst thou spare?
Lost Kempenfelt indeed, were Cowper mute!
To victory, not alone on shuddering seas
Rode Nelson, but on Campbell's tossing rhyme.
Hark to thy great Duke's greater dirge, and doubt
For which was Waterloo the worthier won,
To change the tyrant on a foreign throne,
Or add a faultless ode to English song.
Great deeds make poets: by whose nobler word,
In turn, the blood of heroes is transfused

Into the veins of sluggards, till they rise,
Surprised, exalted to the height of men.

Nor can Columbia choose between the two
Which give more glory to thy Minster gloom.
They are our brave, our deathless, our divine —
Our Saxon grasp on their embattled swords,
Our Saxon numbers in their lyric speech.
We grudge no storied wreath, nay, would withhold
Of bay or laurel not one envied leaf.
Then, on thy proud cliff fronting Europe-ward,
Strong in thyself, not by some weaker prop,
Give to the greeting of a kindred voice
A moment in the ebb of thy disdain.

II

Is it but chance that in thy treasured verse
There is no pæan, no exulting line,
No phrase of martial fervor, to record
The Briton's prowess on our Western shore?
There was no lapse of valiance in thy race —
Or else had Time forgot to mark the years.
Nor hast thou since had lack of many a voice
Whose words, like wings to seed, on every air
From land to hospitable land import

Thy progeny of courage, justice, truth.
Why, then, when all our songs were resonant,
Were all thy singers silent? Candor, speak!
There is a dæmon makes the Muses dumb
When they would praise the wrong: but Liberty
From Nature has inheritance of speech —
The forest harp, the flood's processional,
The glorious antiphone of every shore,
When these are dumb, then poets may be mute!

III

TAUGHT by thy heroes, summoned by thy bards,
Against the imperious folly of thy kings
Twice our reluctant banners were arrayed.
What matter if the victors were not thine,
If thine the victories? Thou art more secure
Saved from the canker of successful wrong.
Thou dost not blush for Naseby, where, of old,
England most conquered, conquering Englishmen.
So when thou hear'st the trumpets in our verse
In praise of our new land's deliverance,
Hard won from Winter, Hunger, and from thee,
And from those allies thou didst hire and scorn,
Deem it not hatred, nor the vulgar pride
Of the arena, nor the greed of fame.

('Twixt men or nations, there 's no victory
Save when an angel overcomes in both.)
Would all our strife were blameless! Some, alas!
Hath trophies hoarded only to be hid,
For courage cannot hallow wanton war.
Be proud our hand against thee ne'er was raised
But to wrench English justice from thy grasp.
And, as to landsmen, far from windy shores,
The breathing shell may bear the murmuring sea,
Still in our patriot song reverberates
The mighty voice that sang at Hampden's side.

IV

True, there are those of our impassioned blood
Who can forget but slowly that thy great
Misread the omens of our later strife,
And knew not Freedom when she called to thee.
These think they hate thee! — these, who have embraced
Before the altar their fraternal foes!
Not white of York and red of Lancaster
More kindly mingle in thy rose of peace
Than blend in cloudless dawn our blue and gray.
Already Time and History contend
For sinking rampart and the grassy ridge
That with its challenge startles pilgrim feet

Along the fringes of the wounded wood.
The bedtime wonder of our children holds
Vicksburg coeval with the siege of Troy,
And the scorned slave so hastened to forgive
The scar has lost remembrance of the lash.
Since Love has drawn the sting of that distress,
For one with wrath to compass sea and years
Were but to make of injury a jest,
Holding the occasion guiltier than the cause.
But Hate 's a weed that withers in the sun;
A cell of which the prisoner holds the key,
His will his jailer; nay, a frowning tower
Invincible by legions, but with still
One secret weakness: *who can hate may love.*
Oh, pausing in thy cordon of the globe,
Let one full drop of English blood be spilled
For Liberty, not England: men would lose
Their fancied hatred in an ardor new,
As Minas Channel turns to Fundy's tide.
Hate thee? Hast thou forgot red Pei-ho's stream,
The triple horror of the ambuscade,
The hell of battle, the foredoomed assault,
When thou didst stand the champion of the world,
Though the awed sea for once deserted thee?
Who then sprang to thee, breaking from the bonds
Of old observance, with a human cry,

Thirsting to share thy glorious defeat
As men are wont to covet victory?
Hate thee? Hast thou forgot Samoa's reef,
The day more dark than any starless night,
The black storm buffeting the hopeless ships,
The struggle of thy sons, and, as they won,
Gaining the refuge of the furious deep,
The immortal cheers that shook the *Trenton's* deck,
As Death might plead with Nature for the brave?
Stands there no monument upon that strand?
Then let remembrance build a beacon high,
That long its warning message may remind
How common danger stirs the brother heart.

V

Why turn the leaf back to an earlier page?
To-day, not moved by memory or fear,
But by the vision of a nobler time,
Millions cry toward thee in a passion of peace.
We need thee, England, not in armed array
To stand beside us in the empty quarrels
That kings pursue, ere War itself expire
Like an o'er-armored knight in desperate lunge
Beneath the weight of helmet and of lance;
But now, in conflict with an inner foe
Who shall in conquering either conquer both.

For it is written in the book of fate:
By no sword save her own falls Liberty.
A wondrous century trembles at its dawn,
Conflicting currents telling its approach;
And while men take new reckonings from the peaks,
Reweigh the jewel and retaste the wine,
Be ours to guard against the impious hands
That, like rash children, tamper with that blade.
Thou, too, hast seen the vision: shall it be
Only a dream, caught in the web of night,
Lost through the coarser meshes of the day?
Or like the beauty of the prismic bow,
Which the sun's ardor, that creates, consumes?
Oh, may it be the thing we image it! —
The beckoning spirit of our common race
Floating before us in a fringe of light
With Duty's brow, Love's eyes, the smile of Peace;
Benignant figure of compelling mien,
Star-crowned, star-girdled, and o'erstrewn with stars,
As though a constellation should descend
To be fit courier to a glorious age.

VI

O THOU that keepest record of the brave,
Something of us to thee is lost, more worth
Than all the fabled wealth of sibyls' leaves.

Not with dull figures, but with heroes' deeds,
Fill up those empty annals. Teach thy youth
To know not North's but Byron's Washington;
To follow Hale's proud step as tearfully
As we pale André's. And when next thy sons
Stand in Manhattan gazing at the swirl
Of eddying trade from Trinity's brown porch,
Astonished, with the praise that half defames,
At the material greatness of the scene,—
The roar, the fret, the Babel-towers of trade,—
Let one stretch forth a hand and touch the stone
That covers Lawrence, saying, "To this height
Our English blood has risen." And to know
The sea still speaks of courage, let them learn
What murmurs it of Craven in one bay,
And what of Cushing shouts another shore.
(Find but one star, how soon the sky is full!
One hero summons hundreds to the field:
So to the memory.) Let them muse on Shaw,
Whose bones the deep did so begrudge the land
It sent its boldest waves to bring them back
Unto the blue-domed Pantheon where they lie,
The while his soul still leads in martial bronze;
Tell them of sweet-dirged Winthrop, whom to name
Is to be braver, as one grows more pure
Breathing the thought of lover or of saint;

Grim Jackson, Covenanter of the South,
And her well-christened Sidney, fallen soon;
Kearny and Lyon. Of such hearts as these
Who would not boast were braggart of all else.
Each fought for Right — and conquered with the Best.
Such graves are all the ruins that we have —
Our broken arch and battlement — to tell
That ours, like thine, have come of Arthur's race.

O England, wakened from thy lull of song,
Thy scepter, sword, and spindle, fasces-like,
Bound with fresh laurel as thy sign of strength,
When shalt thou win us with a theme of ours,
Reclaiming thus thine own, till men shall say:
"That was the noblest conquest of her rule"?

NEW YORK, 1897.

ITALIAN RHAPSODY*

I

Dear Italy! The sound of thy soft name
Soothes me with balm of Memory and Hope.
Mine, for the moment, height and sweep and slope
That once were mine. Supreme is still the aim
To flee the cold and gray
Of our December day,
And rest where thy clear spirit burns with unconsuming flame.

II

There are who deem remembered beauty best,
And thine, imagined, fairer is than sight
Of all the charms of other realms confessed,
Thou miracle of sea and land and light.
Was it lest, envying thee,
The world unhappy be,
Benignant Heaven gave to all the all-consoling Night?

* Read before the Mother Chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Fraternity, William and Mary College, February 10, 1902.

III

Remembered beauty best? Who reason so?
Not lovers, yearning to the same dumb star
That doth disdain their passion—who, afar,
Seek touch and voice in velvet winds and low.
No, storied Italy,
Not thine that heresy,
Thou who thyself art fairer far than Fancy e'er can show.

IV

To me thou art an ever-brooding spell;
An old enchantment, exorcised of wrong;
A beacon, whereagainst the wings of Song
Are bruisèd so, they cannot fly to tell;
A mistress, at whose feet
A myriad singers meet,
To find thy beauty the despair of measures full and sweet.

V

Of old, ere caste or custom froze the heart,
What tales of thine did Chaucer re-indite,—
Of Constance, and Griselda, and the plight
Of pure Cecilia,—all with joyous art!

Oh, to have journeyed down
To Canterbury town,
And known, from lips that touched thy robe, that triad
of renown!

VI

Fount of Romance whereat our Shakspere drank!
Through him the loves of all are linked to thee
By Romeo's ardor, Juliet's constancy.
He sets the peasant in the royal rank;
Shows under mask and paint
Kinship of knave and saint,
And plays on stolid man with Prospero's wand and
Ariel's prank.

VII

Another English foster-child hadst thou
When Milton from the breast of thy delight
Drew inspiration. With a vestal's vow
He fed the flame caught from thy sacred light.
And when upon him lay
The long eclipse of day,
Thou wert the memory-hoarded treasure of his doomèd
sight.

VIII

Name me a poet who has trod thy soil;
He is thy lover, ever hastening back,
With thee forgetting weariness and toil,
The nightly sorrow for the daily lack.
How oft our lyric race
Looked last upon thy face!
Oh, would that I were worthy thus to die in thine embrace!

IX

Oh, to be kin to Keats, but as a part
Of the same Roman earth!—to sleep, unknown,
Not far from Shelley of the virgin heart,
Where not one tomb is envious of a throne;
Where the proud pyramid,
To brighter glory bid,
Gives Cestius his longed-for fame, marking immortal Art.

X

Or, in loved Florence, to repose beside
Our trinity of singers! Fame enough
To neighbor lordly Landor, noble Clough,
And her, our later sibyl, sorrow-eyed.

Oh, tell me—not their arts,
But their Italian hearts
Won for their dust that narrow oval, than the world
more wide!

XI

So might I lie where Browning should have lain,
My "Italy" for all the world to read,
Like his on the palazzo. For thy pain
In losing from thy rosary that bead,
England accords thee room
Around his minster tomb—
A province conquered of thy soul, and not an Arab
slain!

XII

Then take these lines, and add to them the lay,
All inarticulate, I to thee indite:
The sudden longing on the sunniest day,
The happy sighing in the stormiest night,
The tears of love that creep
From eyes unwont to weep,
Full with remembrance, blind with joy, and with
devotion deep.

XIII

Absence from thee is such as men endure
Between the glad betrothal and the bride;
Or like the years that Youth, intense and sure,
From his ambition to his goal must bide.
And if no more I may
Mount to Fiesole . . .
Oh, then were Memory meant for those to whom is
Hope denied.

XIV

Show me a lover who hath drunk by night
Thy beauty-potion, as the grape the dew:
'T were little wonder he were poet too,
With wine of song in unexpected might,
While moonlit cloister calls
With plashy fountain-falls,
Or darkened Arno moves to music with its mirrored
light.

XV

Who can withstand thee? What distress or care
But yields to Naples, or that long day-dream
We know as Venice, where alone more fair
Noon is than night; where every lapping stream

Wooes with a soft caress
Our new-world weariness,
And every ripple smiles with joy at sight of scene so
rare.

XVI

The mystery of thy charm—ah, who hath guessed?
'T was ne'er divined by day or shown in sleep;
Yet sometimes Music, floating from her steep,
Holds to our lips a chalice brimmed and blest:
Then know we that thou art
Of the Ideal part—
Of Man's one thirst that is not quenched, drink he
howe'er so deep.

XVII

Thou human-hearted land, whose revels hold
Man in communion with the antique days,
And summon him from prosy greed to ways
Where Youth is beckoning to the Age of Gold;
How thou dost hold him near
And whisper in his ear
Of the lost Paradise that lies beyond the alluring haze!

XVIII

In tears I tossed my coin from Trevi's edge,—
A coin unsordid as a bond of love,—
And, with the instinct of the homing dove,
I gave to Rome my rendezvous and pledge.
And when imperious Death
Has quenched my flame of breath,
Oh, let me join the faithful shades that throng that
fount above.

SAINT-GAUDENS *

BORN IN DUBLIN, IRELAND, MARCH 1, 1848 — DIED IN CORNISH, NEW HAMPSHIRE, AUGUST 3, 1907

I

Uplands of Cornish! Ye, that yesterday
Were only beauteous, now are consecrate.
Exalted are your humble slopes, to mate
Proud Settignano and Fiesole,
For here new-born is Italy's new birth of Art.
In your belovèd precincts of repose
Now is the laurel lovelier than the rose.
Henceforth there shall be seen
An unaccustomed glory in the sheen
Of yonder lingering river, overleant with green,
Whose fountains hither happily shall start,
Like eager Umbrian rills, that kiss and part,
For that their course will run
One to the Tiber, to the Arno one.
O hills of Cornish! chalice of our spilled wine,
Ye shall become a shrine,

* Read, in part, November 20, 1909, in New York at the presentation to Mrs. Saint-Gaudens of the gold medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters awarded to the sculptor's work.

For now our Donatello is no more!
He who could pour
His spirit into clay, has lost the clay he wore,
And Death, again, at last,
Has robbed the Future to enrich the Past.
He, who so often stood
At joyous worship in your Sacred Wood,
He shall be missed
As autumn meadows miss the lark,
Where Summer and Song were wont to keep melodious tryst.
His fellows of the triple guild shall hark
For his least whisper in the starry dark.
Here, in his memory, Youth shall dedicate
Laborious years to that unfolding which is Fate.
By Beauty's faintest gleams
She shall be followed over glades and streams.
And all that is shall be forgot
For what is not;
And every common path shall lead to dreams.

II

Poet of Cornish; comrade of his days:
When late we met,
With his remembrance how thine eyes were wet!
Thy faltering voice his praise

More eloquently did rehearse
Than on his festal day thy liquid verse.
Since once to love is never to forget,
Let us defer our plaint of private sorrow
Till some less unethereal to-morrow.
To-day is not the poet's shame
But the dull world's; not yet
Shall it be kindled at the living flame
Whose treasured embers
Ever the world remembers.
Not so the sculptor — his immediate bays
No hostile climate withers or delays.
Let us forego the debt of friendly duty;
A nation newly is bereft of beauty.
Sing with me now his undeferrèd fame,—
For Time impatient is to set
This jewel in his country's coronet.
When all men with new accent speak his name,
And all are blended in a vast regret,
There is no place for grief of thee or me:
One reckons not the rivers in the sea.
Sing not to-day the hearth despoiled of fire:
Ours be the trumpet, not the lyre.
Death makes the great
The treasure and the sorrow of the State.
Nor is it less bereaved
By what is unachieved.

Oh, what a miracle is Fame!
We carve some lately unfamiliar name
Upon an outer wall, as challenge to the sun;
And half its claim
Is deathless work undone.
Although the story of our art is brief,
Thrice in the record, at a fadeless leaf,
Falls an unfinished chapter; thrice the flower
Closed ere the noonday glory drank its dew;
Thrice have we lost of promise and of power —
The torch extinguished at its brightest hour —
His comrades all, for whom he twined the rue.
But though they stand authentic and apart
This is in our new land the first great grief of Art.

III

Yet, sound for him the trumpet, not the lyre —
Him of the ardent, not the smouldering, fire:
Whose boyhood knew full streets of martial song
When the slow purpose of the throng
Flamed to a new religion, and a soul.
He knew the lure of flags; caught first the far
drums' roll;
Thrilled with the flash that runs
Along the slanted guns;

Kept time to the determined feet
That ominously beat
Upon the city's floor
The firm, mad rhythm of war.
With envious enterprise
He saw the serried eyes
That, level to the hour's demand,
Looked straight toward Duty's promised land.
Then to be boy was to be prisoned fast
With the great world of battle sweeping past,
While every hill and hollow
Heard the heart-melting music, calling "Follow!"
The day o'er-brimmed with longing and the night
With beckoning dreams of many a dauntless fight,
As though doomed heroes summoned us to see
Thermopylæs and Marathons.
— Ah, had he known who was to be
Their laureate in bronze!

But who can read To-morrow in To-day?
Fame makes no bargain with us, will not say
Do thus, and thou shalt gain, or thus and lose;
Nay, will not let us for another choose
The trodden and the lighted way.
She burns the accepted pattern, breaks the mould,
Prefers the novel to the old,

Revels in secrets and surprise;
And while the wise
Seek knowledge at the sages' gate
The schoolboy by a truant path keeps rendezvous with
Fate.

IV

THIS is the honey in the lion's jaws:
That from the reverberant roar
And wrack of savage war
Art saves a sweet repose, by mystic laws
Not by long labor learned
But by keen love discerned;
For this it bears the palm:
To show the storms of life in terms of calm.
Not what he knew but what he felt,
Gave secret power to this Celt.
Master of harmony, his sense could find
A bond of likeness among things diverse,
And could their forms in beauty so immerse
That to the enchanted mind
Ideal and real seem a single kind.

Behold our gaunt Crusader, grimly brave,
The swooping eagle in his face,

The very genius of command,
And her not less, with her imperious hand,—
The herald Victory holding equal pace.
Not trulier in the blast
Moves prow with mast;
Line mates with flowing line, as wave with following wave —
Rider and homely horse
Intent upon their course
As though she went not with them. Near or far,
One is their import: she the dream, the star —
And he the prose, the iron thrust — of War.

V

So, on the traveled verge
Of storied Boston's green acropolis
That sculptured music, that immortal dirge
That better than towering shaft
Has fitly epitaphed
The hated ranks men did not dare to hiss!
When Duty makes her clarion call to Ease
Let her repair and point to this:
Why seek another clime?
Why seek another place?
We have no Parthenon, but a nobler frieze,—

Since sacrifice than worship nobler is.
It sings — the anthem of a rescued race;
It moves — the epic of a patriot time,
And each heroic figure makes a martial rhyme.
How like ten thousand treads that little band,
Fit for the van of armies! What command
Sits in that saddle! What renouncing will!
What portent grave of firm-confronted ill!
And as a cloud doth hover over sea,
Born from its waters and returning there,
Fame, sprung from thoughts of mortals, swims the air
And gives them back her memories, deathlessly.

VI

I WEPT by Lincoln's pall when children's tears,
That saddest of the nation's years,
Were reckoned in the census of her grief;
And flooding every eye,
Of low estate or high,
The crystal sign of sorrow made men peers.
The raindrop on the April leaf
Was not more unashamed. Hand spoke to hand
A universal language; and whene'er
The hopeful met 't was but to mingle their despair.

Our yesterday's war-widowed land
To-day was orphaned. Its victorious voice
Lost memory of the power to rejoice.
For he whom all had learned to love was prone.
The weak had slain the mighty; by a whim
The ordered edifice was overthrown
And lay in futile ruin, mute and dim.

O Death, thou sculptor without art,
What didst thou to the Lincoln of our heart?
Where was the manly eye
That conquered enmity?
Where was the gentle smile
So innocent of guile —
The message of good-will
To all men, whether good or ill?
Where shall we trace
Those treasured lines, half humor and half pain,
That made him doubly brother to the race?
For these, O Death, we search thy mask in vain!

Yet shall the Future be not all bereft:
Not without witness shall its eyes be left.
The soul, again, is visible through Art,
Servant of God and Man. The immortal part

Lives in the miracle of a kindred mind,
That found itself in seeking for its kind.
The humble by the humble is discerned;
And he whose melancholy broke in sunny wit
Could be no stranger unto him who turned
From sad to gay, as though in jest he learned
Some mystery of sorrow. It was writ:
The hand that shapes us Lincoln must be strong
As his that righted our bequeathèd wrong;
The heart that shows us Lincoln must be brave,
An equal comrade unto king or slave;
The mind that gives us Lincoln must be clear
As that of seer
To fathom deeps of faith abiding under tides of fear.
What wonder Fame, impatient, will not wait
To call her sculptor great
Who keeps for us in bronze the soul that saved the State!

VII

Most fair his dreams and visions when he dwelt
His spirit's comrade. Meager was his speech
Of things celestial, save in line and mould;
But sudden cloud-rift may reveal a star

As surely as the unimpeded sky.
The deer has its deep forest of retreat:
Shall the shy spirit have none? Be, then,
The covert unprofaned wherein withdrew
The soul that 'neath his pensive ardor lay?
Find the last frontier — Man is still unknown
ground.

Things true and beautiful made a heaven for him.
Childhood, the sunrise of the spirit world,
Yielded its limpid secrets to his eye.
He was in Friendship what he was in Art —
Wax to receive and metal to endure.
Looking upon his warriors facing death,
Heroes seem human, such as all might be
Yet not without the consecrating will!
Age is serener by his honoring;
And when he sought the temple's inmost fane
The angels of his Adoration lent
Old hopes new glory, and his reverent hand
Wrought like Beato at the face of Christ.

But what is this that, neither Hope nor Doom,
Waits with eternal patience at a tomb?
A brooding spirit without name or date,

Or race, or nation, or belief;
Beyond the reach of joy or grief,
Above the plane of wrong or right;
A riddle only to the sorrowless; the mate
Of all the elements in calm — still winter night,
Sea after tempest, time-scarred mountain height;
Passive as Buddha, single as the Sphinx,—
Yet neither that sweet god that seems to smile
On mortal good and guile,
Nor wide-eyed monster that into Egypt sinks
And Beast and Nature links;
But something human, with an inward sense
Profound, but nevermore intense;
And though it doth not stoop to teach,
It will with each
Attuned to beauty hold a muted speech;
In its Madonna-lidded meditation
Not more a mystery than a revelation;
Listen! It doth to Man the Universe relate.
O Sentinel before the Future's Gate!
If thou be Fate, art thou not still *our* Fate?

For those who fain would live, but must breathe on
Prisoners of this prosaic age —
Ah, who for them shall read that page
Since wingèd Shelley and wise Emerson are gone?

VIII

How shall we honor him and in his place
His comrades of the Old and Happy Race
Whose Art is refuge Sorrow comes not nigh,
Though Art be twin to Sorrow? They reply
From all the centuries they outsoar,
From every shore
Of that three-continented sea
To which the streams of our antiquity
Fell swift and joyously:
"How, but to live with Beauty?"

Across our Western world without surcease
How many a column sounds the name of Greece!
The sun, loth-lingering on the crest of Rome,
Finds here how many an imitative dome!
O classic quarries of our modern thought,
What blasphemies in stone from you are wrought!
For though to Law, Religion, or the State,
These stones to Beauty first are dedicate,
Yet to what purpose, if we but revere
The temple, not the goddess? — if whene'er
The magic of her deep obsession seem
To master any soul, we call it dream?
Come, let us live with Beauty!

Her name is ever on our lips; but who
Holds Beauty as the fairest bride to woo?
The gods oft wedded mortals: now alone
May man the Chief Immortal make his own.
To Time each day adds increment of age
But Beauty ne'er grows old. There is no gauge
To count the glories of the counted hours.
Flowers die, but not the ecstasy of flowers.
Come, let us live with Beauty!
What infinite treasure hers! and what small need
Of our cramped natures, whose misguided greed,
Hound-like, pursues false trails of Luxury
Or sodden Comfort! Who shall call us free —
Content if but some casual wafture come
From fields Elysian, where the valleys bloom
With life delectable? Such happy air
Should be the light we live in; unaware
It should be breathed, till man retrieves the joy
Philosophy has wrested from the boy.
Come, let us live with Beauty!

Who shall put limit to her sovereignty?
Who shall her loveliness define?
Think you the Graces only three? —
The Muses only nine?
Beyond our star-sown deep of space

Where, as for solace, huddles world with world
(A human instinct in the primal wrack),
Mayhap there is a dark and desert place
Of deeper awe
With but one outer star, there hurled
By cataclysm and there held in leash by law:
If lonely be that star, 't is not for Beauty's lack.
She was ere there was any need of Truth,
She was ere there was any stir of Love;
And when Man came, and made her world uncouth
With sin, and cities, and the gash of hills
And forests, and a thousand brutish ills,—
Moved by eternal ruth
She hid her wounds and gave him, from above,
The magic all his happiness is fashioned of.
Come, let us live with Beauty!

IX

KNIGHTS of the five arts that our sculptor prized:
How shall ye honor him and, in his place,
Those others of the Old and Happy Race
Who lived for beauty, and the golden lure despised?

Painter of music, Architect of song,
Sculptor in color, Poet in clay and bronze,

And thou whose unsubstantial fancy builds
Abiding symphonies from stone and space!
Mount ye to large horizons: ever be
As avid of other beauty as your own.
As nations greater are than all their states,
More than the sum of all the arts is Art.
High are their clear commands, but Art herself
Makes holier summons. Ever open stand
The doors of her free temple. At her shrine
In service of the world, whose hurt she heals,
Ye, too, physicians of the mind and heart —
Shall ye not take the Hippocratic oath?
Have ye not heard the voices of the night
Call you from kindred, comfort, sloth and praise,
To lead into the light the willing feet
That grope for order, harmony and joy? —
To reach full hands of bounty unto those
Who starve for beauty in our glut of gold?

How shall we honor him whom we revere —
Lover of all the arts and of his land?
How, but to cherish Beauty's every flower? —
How, but to live with Beauty, and so be
Apostles of Rejoicing to mankind?
Come, let us live with Beauty!

THE VISION OF GETTYSBURG

(1863–1913)

I

What if, that day, when on those tawny slopes,
Made as by Mars for battle, but till then
Still happily unhistoric, steeped in peace,
Two foes, of age-long enmity, drew near —
(Foes of torn forest and of trampled field,
Not in the smart apparel of parade
But long bedraggled with the toil of war,
Will matched with will, courage to courage set,
In tremulous expectancy of fate,
Each with the hopes of millions in reserve;) —

What if, while strong men nearer to their hearts
Pressed their worn amulets: a wisp of hair;
A woman's tear-stained letters; some small toy;
The penciled tracing of a baby's hand;
Likeness of child by father never seen,
To whom that father was to be a myth
Told by a lonely fireside through the years; —

What if, at that weak moment of the brave,
Before the sign of serried death was given,
The Angel of the Future, in a white dream
Of morning mist that blotted out the scene,
Had swept in solemn beauty down the lines,
Trailing a scroll of visioned prophecy,
Till all had seen that field with second sight,
And all had heard her words:

"O warriors, stay!
Unshotted be the cannon, sheathed the sword.
Look on this picture, half a century hence,
When ye, the tottering remnants who shall live
To mourn the comrades who to-day shall die,
Shall be again the brothers ye are now
But seem not now to be. Look close!
Who are those old who mimic the assault
Ye face to-day, crossing this very ground
To meet not Death but Love? See, clasped in peace,
Not clenched, your hands. Those heads of gray are yours.
Time has outwept the colors of your flags,
The strife forgiven, all the hate forgot.
Sires of the not-yet-orphaned, will ye die?"

With such a vision slowly fading back
From dream to dread, from dread to dream again,
Could one have given the awful word of death,
Or human hearts obeyed it?

Yes, ah yes!
In all great enterprises of the soul
The immediate duty is the strongest lure.
Not lightly did these follow the red trail,
Not for adventure, nor for murderous sport,
Nor glory, oft more sordid than grosser gain;
But for the stark necessity of Man
To heed his conscience' trumpet, lest he die
And live on, dead! So, that the God within,
Who haunts our coward days, might be appeased,
With war's momentum in their heated veins,
And with a Hebrew prophet's certainty,
Each called on Heaven for justice, and rushed on!

II

We say they fought each for the Right he saw.
There is but one good greater than the Right —
The imperishable Love of Right. That stays,
The needle of our destiny, howe'er

Its sentient tremblings momently may swerve.
God of the storm, the fog, the sinking sea,
Be praised for that deliverance!

And yet —
What if that strife, which all men said must be,
Solvent of error, touchstone of respect,
New bond of strength, *need never to have been?*

We doubt, but what shall ermined History say?
Somewhere in every devastating storm
Of hungry flame that sweeps the night with fear
Once lurked a primal spark not hard to quench;
Perchance it smouldered long in soft neglect
Till came a breeze, gentle as infant's breath,
And piled on peril ruin and dismay —
Ashes for beauty, as though patient years
Had been withdrawn from Time, to be consumed.
Of our dire conflagration who shall name
The careless passer, or the sleeping guard,
Or those who left the danger to their sons,
Trusting the futile trench of compromise?
Ah, name them boldly: the revered, the great,
Firstlings of fame in every patriot's thought,
The sculptured saints about the nation's fane,
Their faults forgotten, in a people's pride.

Men of that elder day, who gave us life,
Honor for what you did, but not, alas!
For what you left undone. For, when you built
The nation's temple, hallowing every stone
With sacrifice, you knew a serpent dwelt
'Neath its foundations, yet you took your ease
And left the poison of its brood to spread.
On you, on you the blood of Gettysburg!

III

For whom these fables? Are they not for us?
Are there not other serpents that demand
The firm Herculean grasp? And other fires
Mad with destructive spirit half subdued?
Must Wisdom's torch consume a hundred hills
That it may give us light to see our path
Into peace-haunted valleys?

Land of ours!
Not less they love thee who must chide the faults
Of those that serve thee. Be thou wise as strong —
Justice to-day thy fortress of to-morrow;
Better than battleships thine own Good Will;
The bond of all thy children Equal Laws,
Their pride thine Honor. Not unto thyself

Alone thou livest but to Space and Time!
Lead thou thy leaders, lead they not aright,
That, seeing clearly where our fathers failed,
We leave no legacy of wanton strife
As bones of prey to tempt the beast in Man,
Lest, surfeited with carnage, sadder days
Shall scorn our ashes, and impute to us
The squandered blood of Gettysburgs to come.

GOETHALS OF PANAMA

I

SERVANT of Man, well done!
  Thy war of peace is won.
The dream of continents five and centuries four
  Is dream no more.

Once, on a waiting "peak in Darien,"
  Obscure till then,
But made immortal by a single line
  Of verse divine,
Bold Balboa, following the lure
Of fell Adventure's backward-glancing eyes,
Found the new wonder that he sought.
What did he not endure
That still another watery realm
He thus might add as kingdom to the Spanish helm!
Oh, joy supreme of half-divined surprise!—
When, foremost climber, to his heart he caught

The virgin sight of that uplifted sea,
As new, as free,
As though it had but just begun to be.
Then, as he knelt, a second dream there came:
The "wild surmise"
His silent followers felt, but could not frame.
For who could see so near those oceans flow
But wish them mated—nay, but see them so?
Did he not dream that, far beneath, some day,
The hungry waters would devour a way
To slip his caravels and shallops through
From Cadiz to the riches of Peru?
How could he guess that it would be mankind,
Not nature, that would find
In that Herculean toil a labor to its mind;
And do with zest, ere infant grew to man,
What only geologic ages can;
That what in him was vague, prophetic fancy
Thy modern necromancy—
Thy will, thy wisdom, and the art
Of thy unconquerable heart,
With Love and Duty pure,—
Would make forever real and secure;
That Bounteous Fortune on that distant height,
Where Occident with Orient meets,
Her faith anew to all the world would plight,

Beckoning with either hand to myriad-masted fleets?
There let her statue crown a crowning tower
Like to the topmost flower
  Upon a tropic tree,
  For every ship of every land to see.
There some shall speak of Balboa, some of Keats
(For one must find and one must celebrate);
Others shall ponder long the fame and feats
Of him who forced the bars of that reluctant gate—
Contending whether he was great;
  But all in perpetuity
Shall bless the names of Gorgas and of thee!
  Servant of Man, well done!

II

Since that first dream how long, how weary-long
Crept the slow, lonely centuries, with no heed
  Of the premonitory need
Of that forgotten and neglected land—
Years like to years as waves upon that sleepy strand.
  Now, through thy sympathetic strife,
  The dozing Tropic is no more;
  The world is at its door.
At last it is adjoined to Life,
  To Freedom, and the brood

Of Human Brotherhood.
This is the meed
Of richer triumph in thy deed,—
The nation's pride that soon shall be a pride without alloy:
That far beyond the Zone—
Ours only for the world to own,
Since that belongs to all that all alike enjoy—
By bond assured, not word of mouth,
We shall draw closer to the chivalrous South,
Reaching our hands in friendship, not in greed.
This is the leaping gladness in our song:
That, for the human throng
Who still, in every land, are slaves to ancient wrong,
Half realized, half understood,
Each sun may rise to greet a greater good.
There is a destiny in every need of man,
Though long, oh, weary-long
It wait in patience for the strong.
Who grasp it not may honor him who can:
Servant of Man, well done!

III

Soldier of Peace, all hail!
No longer by the Desperate Cape

Need the fagged mariner, within the maw
Of noonday darkness and the windy shape
Of winter gale,
Reef with his frozen hands the solid sail,
Praying, or cursing, as he thinks on pleachéd
Panama.
More hopefully shall Commerce now let slip
Her homing pigeons, knowing every ship
Hath chance of fairer sky
Whether its course shall lie
From Oregon's dark forests to the cheer
Of proud Manhattan, bright and clear;
From London's sooty docks to many an isle of fear
That long has scarred the Western sea, but now
shall quicklier rise
Through Love and Law an earthly Paradise.
No longer shall the bark illimitably roam
That follows half the globe from Java or Japan;
And they for lagging craft who gaze,
As only lovers can,
Shall count with blessing all the dwindling days
That bring the wandering heart the sooner home.
Now shall be saved not one mere month, but June!
Not three, but Love's long winter of delight!
Beauty of mountain, meadow slope and dune,
As grateful to the welcome traveler's sight

As the recaptured glory of a tune.
Now for a while shall he remain content,
As Life were meant
For fireside voyage or the Muses' flight—
High with Beethoven, or with Shakespeare far;
As if the lore of Fez or Zanzibar
Were that some curly-head
A little longer may delay the hour of bed,
Devouring tales in wonder, to be dreamed in dread.

IV

Since the world's turbulent prime
One war has never ceased—the war with Time:
Our one right war of conquest, yielding spoil
Of years, of hours, of minutes. Why this toil
To be companion to the cloud,
To whisper with the Antipodes,
And, where no blade had ever plowed,
To carve a path for argosies?
Why should we win, at equal cost
Of take and give,
Of gained and lost,
Leisure for leisure, but more worthily to live?
Why agonize and struggle for repose,

Remote, uncertain, and unseen,—
If we impose
On every bud the fury to be rose;
Spy on the seed to witness if it grows;
Despoil the silver dawn of its serene;
Startle the quiet dusk; like Phaëton
Lashing the hours that draw the lagging sun?
Were it worth while the precious years to save
That we may madly gallop to the grave?
Oh time, time, time!—boon that we daily crave
And waste in craving, losing as we save.
Misers of all beside, our spendthrift strife
Flings to each passing wind time that alone is life.

Now have we need of days for nobler use
Than savage barter, or patrician food,
Or ease that only childish joys amuse,
Or lawless pleasure mixed with manners rude,
For while we ponder progress, half the world
Has turned volcano, and aside has hurled
All that long ages built upon its heights.
Not time but life is squandered; and the half
Of all the wheat is winnowed with the chaff.
From trusted harbors the familiar lights
By which we steered to safety have gone out
And left our laden hopes in drifting doubt.

Death, that was once God's servant, now is
Man's
And at his bidding speeds his monstrous
plans.
O marvel never sung to any lyre!
O certainty incredible and dire!
That one with anger thus could set his age on fire!
Of those who with cathedral-patience sought
Our liberty to buttress and uplift,
Who could have thought
The downward plunge to chaos was so swift?

Is life a false gem in our treasure store
Once richly prized, now richly prized no more,
And souls but sands beneath the waves of war?
Come, country of my heart, lest thy pure
pledge
Of hope to the unborn be sodden sacrilege,
Cry, though the cannon echoes, "Peace,
peace, peace!"
Summon thy hosts that kill not but increase:
Firm Justice, calm of Wisdom, fear of
Wrong;
Courage of Science, constancy of Law;
The poise of Knowledge and the glow of
Song;

Religion's solace, Doubt's still reverent awe;
Beauty, the smile of God, Music, His voice.
Oh, may these hold us sane and true,
Lift us from tears and teach us to rejoice,
Throw wide our prison doors
Self-built of jealousy and fear;
That ruined empires may through us renew
The long, slow march toward that millennial year
When men shall be of universal love the willing servitors.

V

O Soldier of our Peace,
If in his conflict thy great work shall be
Not thoroughfare of Honor and Amity,
But route of Conquest, avenue of Hate,
Way of Cupidity and road to Wrong,
Better those hills had never heard the din
Of steam and rivet, and the strong
And jubilant song
Of thy triumphant army, with one purpose kin.
Before it be too late
Adjourn the exultation of the State:
Let it await

An Age of Reason's more propitious date.
Borrow a lustrum to undo the toil,
Unhinge each mighty gate
And let it rust supine on desecrated soil.
Turn the robbed waters backward to the sea,
If in their magic mirror there shall be
No worthier vision of futurity.
The path to wonders, the alluring track,
Unto the jungle mournfully give back,
And let the lazy Isthmus creep
Again in misty silence to its sleep,
Until some sullen earthquake, like a god
Offended, where man's impious foot has trod,
Unwilling to be warder of his bones,
Indignantly regurgitates the cyclopèan stones.

VI

Soldier of Peaceful War!
Forgive us if our doubt shall mar
Thy victory, that has neither blot nor scar:
'T is for the moment, when the Muse's gaze
Wanders from thee. Our country is so dear
Her lovers may indulge a lover's fear.
Forgive us, too, a final word of praise:

That in these troublous days
Thy hand has written for the world to learn
A symphony of Labor, where we may discern
Life as a grander music than before.
  Up to the heights that hide the sun
  We hear the chorded tumult soar,
  The cheer of morning ardor well begun—
  A hundred instruments that blend as one:
  The dominant whistle and the whirring wheel;
    The ringing peal
    Of falling steel on steel;
  The rhythmic hammer and the trilling chain,
With intervals as palpable as pain;
  The pulsing engine, the insistent drill,
Treble of steam and bass of roaring train,
  With Echo making fugue from hill to hill.
  O loyal orchestra by great composer led!
  Thy touch on every string and key
  Has wrought this noble minstrelsy,
Giving a soul to brass and wood inert or dead,
Till all confusions were in beauty wed,
And in the players and the theme
  One harmony arose supreme—
Ungrudging service sounding like a psalm.
    For this the palm!
    Soldier of Peace, well done!

VII

Brother of Man, all hail!
Through such as thee and those that with thee wrought
The world is daily saved—ay, ever saved shall be.
Not by some magic alchemy
By bended sages through the centuries sought;
Not by some cloistered mystery of life;
But by the sheer necessity of strife,
The long, unsacred treadmill of routine.
Oh, more puissant than the authentic mien
Of sceptred king or queen,
The virtues of the humble, ages-old,
That, like the Milky Way, forever hold
Their darkest night within a net of gold:
A natural faith the bookman cannot daunt,
Work, patience, discipline, the comradeship of want,
And simple love assuaging sorrow gaunt.
Great is Invention! Do its annals mark
A single virtue newer than the Ark?
Praise then, the staunch, the overpitied poor,
Who from their riches yet may save the rich,
And something dearer than the Koh-i-noor
Find for them in the mine or in the ditch.

Happy the hands that have but clinging soil
Of honest earth, unstained by blood or wrong,
That make a knighthood of their iron toil,
And even from a pittance save a song.
No overseer of Egyptian brood,
But comrade of their swarthy day, wert thou.
Of all that digged or hewed
None feared thy frown or for thy favor sued,
For lambent justice dwelt beneath thy brow.
Thy gentle strength, thy kindly calm,
Were for their bruises satisfying balm.
For this, to them and thee, the palm!

VIII

SERVANT of Man, well done!
Thy war of Peace is won.
The dream of continents five and centuries four
Is dream no more.

Now to new visions, than the old
More wonderful and bold.
Let sage and seer
Into the dark more confidently peer,
To find the boon in every shape of fear,
The cure that Nature holds for every hurt.

Now let some stripling, venturous and alert,
Trailing a wilder thought
Than Science yet has sought,
Startle shy Knowledge from her inner lair.
Our best, that first was but a castle in the air,
Let it be strong as fair.
Come true all happy tales to children told,
And cloth-of-freize be turned to cloth-of-gold.
Let the imprisoned mind
But beat upon its bars, 't will find
The painted barriers made to break, not bind.
Man is Imagination's only heir:
His messengers of Dream and Dare
He launches from the teeming port of Night
To overtake the flight
Of fleet-winged Progress, laden with new might,
Which to the foremost she lets fall,
The prize of one, the wealth of all.

Who can foretell what blessing may not hap
From this one hair-breadth line upon the map?
What treasure have we was not first a dream?
Seeing the Future but in flash and gleam,
Doubt we to-morrow? On the once-veiled track
Of opulent Yesterday, look back!
The arsenal of our courage is the Past—

The unforgotten great that did not yield,
The unremembered many left upon the field,
Each loyal to his vision to the last.

IX

THEN come with pomp and joy of color-streaming ships,
With shouts of their unshotted iron lips,
With choral song and no unnoble speech,
The good of all eclipsing good of each,
And, while like incense is the smoke upcurled,
Let this our child be sponsored by the world.

Then dedicate to dreams this dream fulfilled:
To Hope, the dream on which all dreams we build,
To Honor, what in honor was conceived,
To Brotherhood, whereby it was achieved,
To Peace, that there no hostile gun may sound
And all the Earth at last be holy ground;
Ay to that dream of dreams, most strangely wrought,—
To Man, the Almighty's most amazing thought.
O Soldier of the blameless sword!
Who serves mankind is servant of the Lord.
Servant of God, well done!

THE CORRIDORS OF CONGRESS

(REVISITED IN VACATION)

TREAD soft, intruding step, this empty haunt
Of swirling crowds has sanctity of grief;
Precincts of sadness are these gilded halls—
The silent crypts of far and turbulent years.
These stairways have been treadmills of despair,
Runways of greed these narrow passages—
The skirmish-lines of battles fought within,
Where many a hope, sore-wounded, struggled on
To perish in the din of others' joy.

Let Fancy listen at these listening walls
And give us back the record that they bear,—
These phonographs of sorrow, where are writ,
In Time's attenuated echoes, sounds
Not louder than the falling of a tear
Or sigh of lovers hiding from pursuit.
Fancy, our finer ear, may here disclose
Whispers of corner-born conspiracies;
The embrasured window's furtive interview;
The guarded plot; the treacherous promise given;
The tragedy that here was masked as hope.

Here the dark powers conspired, using as bribes
Our dearest virtues—goodness, friendship, love.
Here many who came with dawn upon the brow,
A voice of confidence, a knightly port,
Noble expectancy in every step,
Their own ambition with their country's, one,
Forgot their holy dreams beneath the stars,
Sunk in a noonday stupor of prudent air,
Or, caught by tyrannous currents of routine,
Swept, first resisting, then resisting not,
Into that pleasant land of Compromise
That neighbors Hell.

Here is the dryasdust
Who thinks in dollars, scorning sentiment;
The township patriot, letting terrors rage
If only he be safe; the timid good
For those slow suffrage all the bold contend;
The velvet orator whose magniloquence,
Prick it with wit, runs streams of Privilege;
The soft-shod schemer, voice behind his hand,
And flattering arm about his victim's neck;
The vulgar blusterer, to whom we trust
The jewel of the nation's dignity,
Who cannot guard his own; and, faithful clog
About the feet of Progress, he who spurns
All as exotic not in his dooryard found,

Holding the riches of the world as toys:
Books as expedients to divert the mind
From the dull scenery 'twixt town and town;
Art as an adult's picture-book, and Verse
But as a quarry for a funeral speech.

But one may read a cheerier record here:
The statesman rare, compact of bold and wise,
Loving his country like an ancient Greek,
Physician to the body politic,
And with physician-chivalry so imbued
The honest crave his voice, and every rogue
Reckons him enemy; the sturdy drudge
Who knows the elusive fact cannot be caught
In nets of intuition,—sentinel
Upon the nation's treasure-castle walls,
Alert to stealthy peril in the night
From Waste the Traitor as from Greed the Foe;
The civic soldier, fighting for his land
As truly as the veteran who defied
Ambush of fen or forest, standing firm
To conscience' needle, though from every point
The shifting winds be clamoring for the wrong.
Oh, there 's a bravery greater than the assault
On ramparts flaming death when but the touch
Of comrade's shoulder gives the heart support,

When every leaping impulse to go on
Is multiplied to madness by the crowd,
And Life is but an alms by Duty flung.
Peace needs the stouter heart, the cooler mind;
The truceless warfare on the soul's frontiers
Calls for a lonelier fortitude; and oft
The man that will not yield an inch to blows
Can keep no barrier to tears. He that alone,
Would feed his body to the hungry fire,
Let but a loved one plead, his will is wax.
Oh, in the unimpassioned scales of Time
More than the courage of momentum weighs
The courage of resistance, when to yield
Is easy as to breathe, and angels urge
"Only do naught and let the devil pass."

What Iliads of siege these walls could tell!
What shattered lines a hundred times retrieved
From lingering defeat—now by the swords,
Now by the shields, of some sworn group of knights—
To sweep at last to wreathèd victory!
What single combats while the hosts looked on!
What hopes forlorn that failed so gloriously
That History dropped her stylus to admire!

Of all the hands that held our fasces up,
I mind me of one servant of the State

Who walked these halls erect in body and mind.
Not to corroding ease he gave his days
But paid his country, coin for coin, in toil.
Her cut-purse enemies within her gates,
Her gentlemanly murderers of men's souls,—
Who with foul gold would poison every fount
Of Hope and Justice we have built for all,—
And their accomplices who smilingly
Betray a nation to oblige a friend,
Him came not nigh with their accursed arts,
To tempt, to beg, to threaten, to cajole.
Though richly gifted, he disprized his gifts—
Far vision, loyal reasoning, kindling speech,
And true intent that pilots in the dark.
Not faultless, he could frankly own his fault,
And salve with candor the impetuous wound.
While he was speaking nothing seemed of worth
But the high path he trod—not happiness,
Nor peace, nor love, nor leisured luxury,
Nor that acclaim of many called success,
But to be leader in the march of Man.
With more ambition, he had been of those
Who from its trance of comfort wake the world,
And leave a name to stir the pulse of youth.

Thoughtless of fame,—without the artist-sense
Of the deed's value miscalled vanity—

He left to chance the record of those days.
His tribute to the passionate regret
Of comrades fighting still, the respect of foes,
Who miss his swift sword and his dented shield.
Remembering how at one great breach he stood
Pleading for honor when men sued for gain,
I hear not only echoes of his voice
But strains of patriot music from the Past:
The harp of David, laureate of the Lord,
Sounding the spirit's summons to his race;
The lyre of Sophocles, half looking back
To cheer his followers, now as brave as he;
The horn of Roland, clear from brim to brim
Of Pyrenèan valleys, with its call,
"Come up and find your courage on the heights."

ENVOI

Not only with a brother's pride and love
Weave I for him this coronal of verse—
Affection's salvage from the wreck of Time—
But with the hope that for some wavering soul,
Tempted to point of tension, it may turn
A cup of trembling to a cup of strength,
And make us prouder of the brave who guard
The walls that guard the freedom of the land.

1914.

EMBATTLED FRANCE

Across the sea that once was free now let the message leap
That France has won our Western hearts, and waked our souls from sleep!
Proud land! No more shall we mistake the shallows for the deep.

They knew her not who lightly thought her frivolously gay—
She who first taught our grimmer world the sanity of play;
They saw the birds that fly the nest but not the brood that stay.

And we who knew and loved her true and shared her welcome kind—
The welcome of her heart, and more, the welcome of her mind—
How could we know these newer bonds that evermore shall bind!—

That she, the Queen of Peace serene, who sought the
sword no more,—
That she, the Queen of Art, who keeps the key of
Beauty's door,
More royal than her royal lines, should be the Queen
of War!—

For, though the years have drowned in tears her
thrones and quarterings,
She, kingless, has not lost the proud residuum of
kings:
Noblesse oblige is written fair on every flag she flings.

Let others plead a brutal need and compromise with
faith,
And soil the robe of honor, and make of joy a wraith,
No taint of lie shall linger in any word she saith.

They reckoned ill who thought her will was sunk in
sloth or pride,
Who held as weak her patience and on her feuds relied.
No power can lock the scabbards where thinking
swords abide.

Oh, there is calm of Sabbath psalm and there is calm
of woe,

And calm of slaves who never the calm of freemen
know,
When, though the storm may tear the wave, the sea is
calm below.

Upon the air no martial blare proclaimed the fateful
call;
No drum need make the summons the spirit makes to
all;
Not softlier to the solemn ear the autumn leaflets
fall.

With gaze that saw far things of awe she stood as in a
trance,
But faltered not before the shock of War's long-
dreaded chance,
And every soul was born again—an effigy of France!

Oh, eyes that weep in lonely sleep but show no
waking tear,
Oh, lips with their brave silences and lingering words
of cheer:
What memories of parting have made the dangers
dear!

And when the breath of icy Death sweeps like a winter
rain

And like a scythe the iron hail cuts down the human grain,
How bleed we with her wounded and sorrow for her slain!

And when beside the Marne's red tide—a lioness at bay—
She gave September unto Mars to make him holiday,
She saved with hers our kindred soil three thousand miles away.

How we acclaim Man's sacred name, as second unto God,
And deem our bond a brotherhood divine of cloud and clod!
Where are men fellows but in France, save underneath the sod?

Her heart a cup of joy filled up to greet the dancing day,
How willingly she spilled the wine and threw the cup away
That deserts yet unpeopled may live in peace for aye!

The triple watchword of her faith shall spread to every land,

Till free and equal comrades th' ennobled nations
stand,
And all shall take the sacrament from her devoted
hand.

And when Hate's last far crop is past, sown broadcast
by the blind,
The memory of her chivalry shall stir in humankind
A love akin to bridal love,—the passion of the mind.

Envoi, to the Republic

When Peace and Toil shall guard thy soil in all its
ancient girth,
And Freedom, by thy fortitude, has found a newer
birth,
We still shall cry, "My France, Our France, the
France of all the Earth!"

March, 1916

TOWERS OF REMEMBRANCE

I. At the Hague

"Till the war-drum throbbed no longer and the battle flag was furled
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World."
Alfred Tennyson, "Locksley Hall," 1842.

Great Laureate of England, mighty voice,
Drowning detraction in the stormy roll
Of his melodious numbers: does he still,
The new John of a new Apocalypse,
Seer of the world's desire, from Patmian mount
Discern the prophet-vision of his prime?
Haunts he these hallowed and devoted halls
That make a temple for his noblest thought?
Shall he find here the glory he foresaw,
Or but the false dawn of the day to be?
He, who with Moses' sight beheld the Land,
He, who with rapture caught from David's harp
Chanted the New Time—shall not he inspire
With love and justice those who gather here?
Then let a tower of remembrance rise

Among the tranquil shades of leafy Hague,
Seen from the dunes and dikes by Freedom prized;
And christen it The Tower of Tennyson;
And let it be inhabited by bells
Of tones as sweet as his own harmonies
That rang the Old World out, the New World in;
And lest the sages who 'twixt nations judge
Forget their mighty function—nearest God's—
Let one bell, still more solemn than the rest,
Be draped and muffled, joining not the choir
Of those, the joyous morning stars of sound;
But on that day that mates with Calvary
When dire Ambition broke the mace of Law—
The Dies Iræ of our race on earth—
That day, in warning, let it *toll* . . . *toll* . . . *toll.*

II. At Geneva

"What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind."

—Woodrow Wilson, at Mount Vernon, July 4, 1918.

The poets know, all good is possible.
They peer into the vast as in a dream,
Giving the image of some shadowy boon
The boldness and the certitude of art.
The crowd is tolerant of bard or seer,

And, when his thought strikes deepest in the heart,
Making adventure into heaven or hell,
Owns, "That's a pretty fancy, neatly turned."
But when there comes the Champion of the Dream
Willing to battle for it, if need be,
To the last desperate inch of broken sword,
"A dream no longer" as his rallying cry—
That is the test of man.
How far it seemed
From vision to fulfillment—joy to joy!
Between, what desolation, what dismay,
What multitudinous sorrow!—till at last
The yearning of the universal hope
Rose to a peak in one determined soul
In whose "It shall be!" spoke the voice of Heaven.
While sceptics doubt and timid whisper fear,
Here half a hundred peoples have clasped hands
In honorable compact: only we—
My noble country counts the cost of peace,
And lingers, half ashamed, half longingly,
Awhile, without the hospitable door.
Here, too, a tower, staunch as was the deed!
Here, at the crossways of the modern world,
Where Leman's meditative mirror hides
The Rhone's green avalanche, as Peace erewhile
Hid turbulent conflict, let the beacon rise

To that sworn servant of mankind. Inscribe
Whatever names below, his be supreme,
That justice may be justice first to him.
Fronting the morning, let there be a bronze
Of one who stands upon a ship, as though
Searching uncertain seas—no Emperor
Envisaged by his fate, the prisoner
Less of *Bellerophon* than of his past:
But The One Commoner of All the Earth,
With eyes upon the Future, while he holds
Commerce with Heaven for benignant help,
Seeking how he may compass from despair
The good of ages and the good of all.
Show the undaunted brow, the stature firm,
The poise against the westward-blowing blast,
The Atlantean loneliness of one who bears
Burdens that in our other holy wars
Our sacred burden-bearers never knew.

Then shall The Wilson Tower be a sign
Of what one man conceived, proclaimed, endured,
In war's ordeal and in toil of peace,
That the pure purpose of our sword be built
Deeper than shifting sands of old intrigue,
Stronger than casual tempests of desire;
That Brotherhood—the myth of centuries,

The faith of martyrs, every poet's dream,
Yea, Bethlehem's evangel—might come true.
All peoples understood him, since he spoke
The other tongue of each, democracy.
Through all the thronging perils of his path
His aim was justice, for he knew full well
If it be done the heavens will not fall.

Loving the lowly and by them beloved,
What greater happiness could them betide
Than from their meagreness to raise this tower,
Each with the smallest token of his land,
Which, consecrated thus, would be restamped
The universal coinage of the heart?
Here, where Helvetia, happy, equal, free,
Her old tradition holds inviolate,
Secure in civic virtue not in law,
Let it arise: that, pondering what it means,
The sentinel and synonym of right,
Nations shall be ashamed to give or take
Less than their due; and all shall kindlier grow;
And those who look on yonder loftiest Alp
And on this highest mark the race has reached,
Shall know that Nature, though she hold our dust,
Cannot o'er-top, or tomb, the soul of Man.

1922.

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